

Writing a New France, 1604–1632

Empire and Early Modern French Identity

Brian Brazeau

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1604–1632
Empire and Early Modern French Identity

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To Agnès, Nicolas, and Alexandre: merci.

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Note on Translations

Many of the works of the authors treated in this book exist in bilingual editions. When this is not the case, translations are my own. Early-modern French citations are followed by an English translation, in order to present the reader with a clearer vision of the original. Modern secondary French sources are cited in English translation only, with French titles cited where used in the footnotes and bibliography. Sources consulted but not cited directly are included in the bibliography. The intention in all translations was clarity.

Introduction

Writing a New France

Les plus curieux aussi et les moins dévots, qui n'ont d'autre sentiment que de se divertir et d'apprendre dans l'histoire l'humeur, le gouvernement et les diverses actions et cérémonies d'un peuple barbare, y trouveront aussi de quoi se contenter et satisfaire, et peut-être leur salut, *par la réflexion qu'ils feront sur eux-mêmes*.

[The more inquiring readers also, and those less inclined to religion, who have no other idea than to amuse themselves and learn from the *History* the disposition, behavior and various activities and ceremonies of a barbarous people, will also find in it wherewith to be content and satisfied, and perchance their own salvation as a result of the reflexions they will make upon themselves.]

—Gabriel Sagard, *Le Grand voyage du pays des Hurons* (1632)

Looking Outward, Looking Inward

In the early seventeenth-century, France was slowly awakening from the collective nightmare of the Wars of Religion between Huguenots and Catholics (1562–1598). After thirty-five years of nearly uninterrupted bloodshed, the Treaty of Vervins and the Edict of Nantes officially brought relative peace and stability to the kingdom. The French began to focus their energies beyond the martial sphere, attending to elements that had been neglected during the conflicts. Among the most important of these was overseas expansion.¹ Our study begins in the years directly following the Wars, when explorers, traders, and colonizers came to Northeastern America with great expectations concerning the establishment of what they called *La Nouvelle-France*.

French travellers crossed the Atlantic to the nascent colony of New France with varied ideas both as to what France meant, and how to produce a new one in America. The following pages examine the French encounter with *La Nouvelle-France* in the years 1604–1636 as a contemplation, re-evaluation, and struggle with identity. Two major questions guide our readings of colonial descriptions. First, what can narratives of contact with America tell us about the diverse conceptions of “Frenchness” at the time? Second, how did both the land and people of America challenge, resist, alter, solidify, or erode those conceptions?

¹ France made several attempts at exploration and colonial implantation during the Civil Wars: Laudonnière and Ribaut in Florida (1565), Villegagnon in Brazil (1556), La Roche de Mesguez, Roberval, and Chauvin in Canada (1601), for example. However, these were all short-lived due to lack of sustained royal support, religious strife, and impediment by France’s Iberian rivals.

The fundamental claim of this study is that as these writers were considering what form France's eponymous colony might take, they were simultaneously "writing a new France."

An Empty Name?

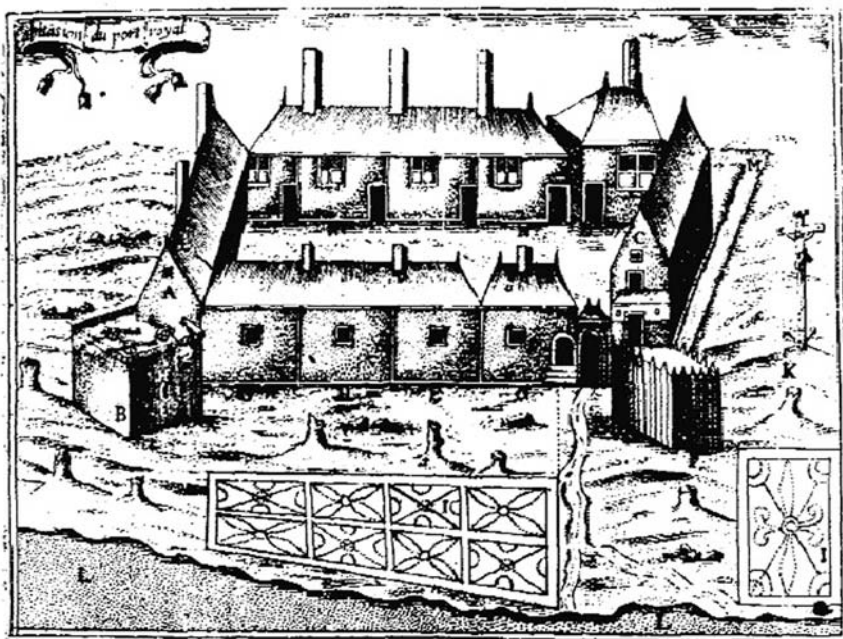
In May 1606, Marc Lescarbot made the perilous journey to the tiny outpost of Port Royal in Canada, under the auspices of the king's Lieutenant Pierre du Gua de Monts. His stay in New France left him torn between hope and bitterness. After a two-month voyage aboard the *Jonas*, followed by a year in the young colony, De Monts's trade monopoly was revoked. The party was forced to abandon their colonial work and return to France in July 1607; the dream of establishing a perennial French entity in North America was seriously compromised. Lescarbot proclaims in his *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (1609–18) that "Rien ne sert de qualifier une NOUVELLE-FRANCE, pour estre un nom en l'air & en peinture seulement" [It is of no avail to give the name of New France, if it remains a name alone, and solely in a painted show].² Upon reading this lament, one feels Lescarbot performing, echoing the Recollect missionary Gabriel Sagard in the quotation preceding this chapter, a *réflexion* on what it would mean to recreate a France in America. Behind his concern with the emptiness of the appellation, we sense the multitude of possibilities for filling it with meaning.

La Nouvelle-France, in Lescarbot's and other travelers' writings, is far more than a vacant colonial label. For the seventeenth-century voyager, New France carries the promise of renewed "Frenchness"; for the modern scholar, a reflection on the colonial name provides a fascinating look into early-modern politics of identification. Lescarbot's distress inspired the simple yet far-reaching question that instigated this study: "What did early-modern French travel writers mean when they used the term *New France*?"

Transfer

France's overseas encounters are currently eliciting great scholarly enthusiasm. European-Amerindian relations, the modes of circulation of new ideas in the metropolis, and the long-term effects of colonization on native populations are among the major areas explored by a range of European, Canadian, and American researchers. Two key spheres of interest are especially pertinent to this book: that France and its colonies were not separate and distinct but rather mutually influential; and the implication therein that studying one naturally implies examining the other. Alice B. Conklin prefaced a recent issue of *French Historical Studies* dedicated to French colonial histories with a discussion of fundamental "... reciprocal influences and multidirectional flows between France and its

² Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France/Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, trans. and ed. H.P. Biggar and W.L. Grant (3 vols, Toronto, 1907), vol. 1, pp. 214, 10. References to Lescarbot show page numbers of the French, then of the English translation.



- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| A Logemens des artisans. | F Palissade de pieux. | rebastir, & y logea le fleur |
| B Plate forme où estoit le canon. | G Le four. | Boulay quand le fleur du |
| C Le magasin. | H La cuisine. | Pont s'en retourna en France. |
| D Logement du fleur de Pont-grave & Champlain. | O Petite maisonnette où l'on retiroit les vivres de nos barques; que de puis le fleur de Portmoucourt fit | P La porte de l'habitation. |
| E La forge, | | Q Le cimetiere. |
| | | R La riviere. |

Fig. I.1 Map of Port Royal from Champlain's *Voyages*, From *The Works of Samuel Champlain* (7 vols., Toronto, 1922–35), vol. 1, p. 250. Image used with kind permission of the Champlain Society.

diverse colonial possessions.”³ Closely addressing the concerns at hand in this study, Laurier Turgeon, in the introduction to *Transferts culturels et métissages Amérique/Europe, XVIe–XXe siècle / Cultural transfer, America and Europe : 500 years of Interculturation*, asserts that North America is a propitious site for the analysis of the notion “.... that cultural identity is not fixed or self-contained but rather unstable, because it is being continually transformed by contact, conflict and exchange with other cultures.”⁴ The arguments of *Writing a New*

³ Alice B. Conklin, “Introduction,” *French Historical Studies*, Special Issue: Writing French Colonial Histories (Summer, 2004).

⁴ Laurier Turgeon, “Introduction,” in Laurier Turgeon and Denys Delâge (eds), *Transferts culturels et métissages Amérique/Europe, XVIe–XXe siècle / Cultural transfer, America and Europe: 500 years of interculturation* (Paris, 1996), p. 37.

France will be constructed on the notion of flow between disciplines, between metropolis and colony, and between colonial actors, in an attempt to understand how France and New France, through the literary-historical travel writings of the early century, interacted and mutually transformed notions of the self through the conceptualization of a *Nouvelle-France*.

The “Imaginary” and Observation

A particularly astute reader of *récits de voyage* once remarked that “... the travel narrative is a text of observation haunted by its Other, the imaginary.”⁵ Travel writing, in this light, is “... at once a staging (fiction, in the English sense of the term) and an ordering (discourse).”⁶ An author contemplates a strange foreign place, and that contemplation is confronted with the “... beliefs and ideologies that a rationality postulates, produces, or critiques.”⁷ The following chapters explore moments when observation and the imaginary collide.

Each section of *Writing a New France* follows a similar general structure. First we focus on what these authors thought they would be able to create in New France (their imaginaries), second, on the realities of what they encountered, and third on the processes by which they attempted to integrate expectations with experience.

Imagining a New France

Lescarbot’s attempt to charge the term *Nouvelle-France* with meaning led me to examine other texts for visions of an American France. The lawyer and humanist was one of the most fervent early-modern advocates of the establishment of a French entity in North America, which explains in part his forceful declaration. He is not alone, however, and a literary exploration of nascent French Canada in this light produces striking results.

Authors pondering the name New France at this time *imagined* it as much more than a simple colonial name. For many of them, the colony was a possible mirror image of the original. This desire is presented extremely powerfully throughout the writings of the early century.

The Jesuit missionary Pierre Biard declares that, “C’est la nouvelle France, ceste nouvelle terre, dy-je, decouverte premierement au dernier siecle, par nos François, terre jumelle avec la nostre, sujete à mesmes influences, rangée en mesme parallele, située en mesme climat” [It is New France, this new land, first

⁵ Michel de Certeau, “Travel Narratives of the French to Brazil,” *Representations*, Special Issue: The New World (Winter, 1991), p. 225.

⁶ Ibid., p. 222.

⁷ Ibid., p. 222.

discovered in the last century by our countrymen, a twin land to ours, subject to the same influences, lying in the same latitude, and having the same climate].⁸

Biard understands New France in terms of analogy; not only does he repeat the word *same* but he goes as far as to name New France the “twin” of Old France. He continues by provocatively drawing a direct parallel between the two entities, noting that there is in fact nothing separating France from its American counterpart: “Ces terres sont parallèles à nostre France, n’y ayant rien entre la Guienne & ces dictes contrées” [These lands are parallel to our France, nothing lying between Guienne and said countries].⁹ If the Spanish king, enemy of the French, is assured at the time that the sun never sets on his empire, the French can aspire to the same glory through their American lands.¹⁰ When God gives night to the French, “... par droicte ligne de nous, il va donner le bon jour au delà de nostre Ocean, nous ayant icy recommandé au repos de la nuit” [... in a direct line from us, it goes forth to give good day across our ocean, leaving us here to the stillness of the night].¹¹ The Recollect Friar Gabriel Sagard states that “Vous savez (ô mon Seigneur et mon Dieu) que nous avons porté nos vœux depuis tant d’années dans la nouvelle France” [Thou knowest my Lord and my God, that we have devoted ourselves for so many years to New France].¹² The explorer and administrator Samuel de Champlain conveys to the queen that his interests come “... principalement de la Nouvelle France, où j’ay tousjours en desir d’y faire fleurir le Lys” [... especially of New France, where it is my constant desire to make the Lily flourish].¹³ Each of these writers presents the fervent aspiration to produce an American twin across the Atlantic.

A Multitude of Images

New France was clearly imagined as a potential mirror image of the original. What that mirror was supposed to reflect, however, differed for each voyager.

⁸ Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (73 vols., Cleveland, 1896–1901), vol. 3, pp. 32–3. Bilingual edition, page numbers refer to French then to English translations.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 38–9.

¹⁰ At the time, for Spain “Philippe III peut faire le tour du monde sans sortir de son royaume!” [Philip III can travel around the world without leaving his kingdom!], see Marcel Trudel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (5 vols., Montreal, 1963), vol. 2, p. 6. (my translation)

¹¹ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 3, pp. 32–3.

¹² Gabriel Sagard, *Sagard’s Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons/Le Grand voyage au pays des Hurons*, trans. and ed. George M. Wrong (Toronto, 1939), pp. 275, 3. For citations, we use this bilingual edition over the excellent 1990 version edited by Réal Ouellet and Jack Warwick due to the existing translations. Both were consulted for the preparation of this book. Page numbers refer to French, then English.

¹³ Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain/Oeuvres*, ed. H.P. Biggar (6 vols, Toronto, 1922–35), vol. 1, p. 210. French and English appear on the same pages in this edition.

The “imaginaries” of the writers at hand were influenced by two main areas: conceptions of the self, and conceptions of what they would find in America.

Imaginaries of the Self

The authors discussed here came to New France with diverse backgrounds, religious affiliations, educations, rivalries, and individual temperaments. Although it may seem a patent truth, it is important to remember the ways in which such differences colored notions of what a *Nouvelle France* should resemble. As one scholar notes, “... one does not see things the same way as a missionary, holder of an administrative mandate, or simple voyager.”¹⁴ Explorers, missionaries, and merchants, while they often worked together in the colonial enterprise, did not carry the same vision of that enterprise, as we see in depth below.

Imaginaries of the Other

In addition to social, professional, and personal concerns, the ideas tempering expectations and desires stemmed from earlier French contacts with the exotic in the Orient and in America. While it is certain that the Orient, through the geographical proximity of the Turkish Empire, was a more familiar version of difference, America was understood in large part through sustained contact with Brazil in the sixteenth century.¹⁵ Through the texts of André Thevet and Jean de Léry, and the philosophical treatments of Michel de Montaigne in the essays “Des Cannibales” and “Des Coches,” Brazil was a crucial factor in understanding American difference.¹⁶ These writings, inspired by commerce dating from 1504 and continuing throughout the sixteenth century, as well as colonial adventures such as Villegagnon’s in 1556, were available primarily to a literate elite. Various public spectacles, for example the *Fête brésilienne* at Rouen in 1550 or the presentation with great ceremony of members of the Tupinimba tribe at court in 1613, extended the reach of America into the French imagination. Visions of the

¹⁴ Pierre Guillaume, “Introduction,” in Pierre Guillaume and Laurier Turgeon (eds), *Regards croisés sur le Canada et la France: voyages et relations du XVIe au XXe siècle: actes des Congrès des sociétés historiques et scientifiques. La Rochelle, 2005* (Paris, 2007), p. 15. (my translation)

¹⁵ Geoffrey Atkinson has famously asserted that America was secondary to the Orient in European minds of the Renaissance. While this certainly appears true, French-Brazilian contact in the sixteenth century, and the resonance of that contact among learned circles, meant that understanding America had to pass through a reflection on Brazil. See, in particular: *La Littérature géographique française de la Renaissance Répertoire bibliographique, Avec 300 reproductions photographiques. Descriptions de 524 impressions d’ouvrages publiés en français avant 1610, et traitant des pays et des peuples non européens, que l’on trouve dans les principales bibliothèques de France et de l’Europe occidentale* (Paris, 1927). For a look at the literary and theatrical presence of the Ottoman in seventeenth-century France, see Michèle Longino, *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (Cambridge, 2002).

¹⁶ Jean de Léry, *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (1557); André Thevet, *Les singularités de la France antarctique* (1558); Montaigne, *Essais* (1580).

Amerindians, their customs, languages, and susceptibility to a French notion of “civilization,” be they fundamentally negative as with Thevet, ultimately positive as in de Léry, or destined as critiques of the metropolis as in Montaigne, were filtered through an understanding of contact with Brazil. Ancient climate theories that the South was torrid and the Northeast temperate, confirmed for the former in South America, were thought to hold for Canada as well. Both Lescarbot and Sagard, among others, cite previous French travellers heavily in their writings on North America, and the tenacious animosity for Iberian colonialism in these texts stems from experiences with Portuguese and Spanish resistance to French implantation further South. One historian has gone as far as to assert that “Brazil introduced Canada to France.”¹⁷

In addition to Brazilian adventures, early North American colonial attempts would also have been circulating in these travelers’ minds. From Jacques Cartier’s three voyages (1534, 1535, 1541) in the St. Lawrence Valley, through Laudonnière and Ribaut in Florida (1565), and La Roche de Mesguez, Roberval, and P. Chauvin in Canada (1601), the gains were minimal in the eyes of contemporaries. Nevertheless, what Marie-Christine Pioffet has termed “Canada’s bad reputation in the eyes of the French” of the time did not diminish the eagerness of the authors we treat, although it certainly elicited wariness.¹⁸

Thus, for these voyagers, expectations were colored by their own histories, categories of difference inherited from previous adventures, guarded enthusiasms stemming from abortive attempts in North America, and a desire to move beyond Spanish dominance in the New World. Despite previous failures, as we saw above in the calls for an American twin, these writers convey great hope for the establishment of a *Nouvelle-France* in the New World.

“Observation” and Collision

Beyond what travelers imagined New France might be were the realities of the New World. What effect did the observation of the American space have on visions of a France across the Atlantic? The expectations and desires for New France, this “twin” full of hope, often found themselves in conflict with the realities—geographical and human—of North America. What these travelers encountered frequently did not live up to their anticipated vision of a New France. Pierre Biard echoes Lescarbot’s disappointment in his cry “O mon Dieu! Où est icy

¹⁷ Philippe Bonnichon, “Image et connaissance du Brésil: diffusion en France, de Louis XII à Louis XIII,” in Katia de Queiros Mattoso, Idelette Muzart-Fonseca dos Santos and Denis Rolland (eds), *Naissance du Brésil moderne* (Paris, 1998), p. 30. (my translation)

¹⁸ Marie-Christine Pioffet, *Espaces lointains, espaces rêvés: dans la fiction romanesque du Grand siècle* (Paris, 2007), p. 42. (my translation) For the scars left by the violent confrontations with the Spanish in Florida, see Frank Lestringant, *Le Huguenot et le sauvage. L’Amérique et la controverse coloniale en France au temps des Guerres de Religion (1555–1589)* (Paris, 1990), especially Chapter 5.

l'ambition des Grands?" [Oh my God, where is here the ambition of the Great?].¹⁹ Gabriel Sagard conveys his severe displeasure "... que les choses n'y ont pas si heureusement aduancé, comme nos esperances nous promettoient" [... that matters have not been so happily advanced as our expectations promised].²⁰ Beyond simply demonstrating the lack of royal assistance to colonial actors, these authors depict a space that, for them, fell far short of what a *Nouvelle-France* should be. When expected to be geographically similar, Canada was found to be frigid; when linguistic likeness was hoped for, Amerindian languages proved maddeningly dissimilar to French; when customary symmetry was desired, cultures were found to be strikingly distinct.

The often disappointing meeting between this imaginary double across the ocean and the physical experiences of America, be they environmental, human, linguistic, or philosophical, led to the dilemma of how to reconcile the desire for an American twin with clear evidence of difference. The moments examined in the chapters that follow have in common their wish to transform American realities into an image carried in French imaginations. Our interests lie not with whether or not they succeeded, for the vision of identity discussed below refuses the possibility that a fixed "New France" would ever be possible. We will be interested in attempts, struggles, failures, and reevaluations; here the focus will be on process rather than product.

The Other, Identity, Identification, and "Frenchness"

Before exploring others' definitions of the crucial term *Nouvelle-France*, we must first define a few of our own. Underpinning our readings are three main beliefs: first is the idea that defining a self requires the specular omnipresence of an Other; second, that America provided an unprecedented encounter with otherness; and third, that the desire for a fixed identity will always meet with resistance.

My Other, My Self

Much of the multifarious critical writing concerning identity formation in roughly the last fifty years has had at its heart the notion that in order to characterize oneself, it is necessary to have an opposite, an Other, against which a sense of "self" can be defined. This is true of both linguistically based and more psychoanalytically inspired visions of identity creation. As Paul Ricoeur asserts, "... the self implies otherness to such a degree of intimacy that one cannot be conceived without the other."²¹ The Other can at times be a source of envy and identification (I see what

¹⁹ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 3, pp. 34–5.

²⁰ Sagard, *Sagard's Long Journey*, pp. 280, 10.

²¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris, 1990), p. 14. (my translation)

I am not, but what I wish I were), and at times, it can be a source of rebellion (I define myself against what I am not; I reject the Other).

An image against which one defines the self finds particular pertinence in America, where Europeans encountered some of the most striking examples of “Otherness”—both human and geographic—experienced thus far. Tzvetan Todorov referred to this as “the most astounding meeting of our history.”²² For Mary-Louise Pratt, travel and exploration writing, particularly about America “... produced Europe’s differentiated conceptions of itself in relation to something it became possible to call ‘the rest of the world’.”²³ Finally, Michel de Certeau, in his multiple reflections on a complex European relationship to difference, or *heterology*, understood travel writing and travel writers as privileged, often violent actors in a process of (mis)-understanding the Other.²⁴ In America, the separation from centers of power, the extraction from the familiar, and the necessity for communication led to a fascinating and complex meeting with difference that often transformed identities.

Beyond this, taking into account recent work on contact between Amerindians and Europeans, we will be wary of oversimplifying the specificities of both. Nathalie Zemon Davis, in a contribution to the important collection entitled *Decentring the Renaissance*, defines several modern scholarly approaches to early European-American cultural contact. She begins with the gaze strategy, or the European *regard*, concerned with “... describing European attitudes and images of non-European peoples and showing them to be projections of European anxieties or elaborations from European categories or the pastoral.”²⁵ The danger of this relatively static vision, she notes, is that it may lead to a monolithic representation of European versus American, and refuse the notion of changes brought about by contact between cultures. In sum, one of the limits of the “gaze strategy” is that “... it puts all the attention on the Europeans and what they think.”²⁶

In addition to this type of strategy, Davis writes, scholars began to look at contact in the framework of two distinct and antagonistic cultural groups working to further different interests and understandings of the world. This is the writing of

²² Tzvetan Todorov, *La conquête de l'Amérique: la question de l'autre* (Paris, 1991), p. 9. (my translation)

²³ Mary-Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), p. 4.

²⁴ See, for example, the article cited above, note 5. In addition: “Montaigne’s ‘Of Cannibals’: The Savage ‘I,’” in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, 1986); *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988). On de Certeau and America, see, among others, Luce Giard, “Epilogue: Michel de Certeau’s Heterology and the New World,” in Stephen Jay Greenblatt (ed.), *The New World: Essays in Memory of Michel de Certeau* (Berkeley, 1991).

²⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, “What Strategies for Decentring?” in Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (eds), *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective* (Toronto, 2001), pp. 19–32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

America as a site of struggle. The resulting vision of a “polarity of domination and resistance” finds its limits, perhaps, in its excessive emphasis on divisions.²⁷

A look at contact in relation to clear polarities often obscures moments of mixture, of which, from the work of Richard White, Homi Bhabha, and others, we have learned that there were many. In sum, once Europeans and Natives began living together, a ‘middle ground’ was naturally established through the “... accumulated practices of Amerindians and Europeans in dealing with each other diplomatically, violently, in anger, and in friendship.”²⁸

In the context of our study, the French certainly pushed in any way possible at the Otherness of the America. The important aspect to remember is that the New World, both through its land and people, pushed back. Rather than the story of a shoving match, however, *Writing a New France* will be the story of the imprints left on notions of the self by each push. This book is informed by the need “... to shed the constraints imposed by the kind of historiography that dichotomizes Europe and America, Europeans and Amerindians, and studies them only as discrete entities.”²⁹ The desire to remain distinct and unchanged was present in the minds of the French; the reality was quite different.

Identity and Identification

The notion of identity poses a conceptual problem. The aspiration in narrating oneself is unity. Identity, or the desire for it, serves an integrative function. However, the success of this integration, or even its possibility, is hugely contested in the human sciences. In his essay “Who Needs Identity?” Stuart Hall remarks that

Directly contrary to what appears to be its settled semantic career, this concept of identity does *not* signal that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change; the bit of the self which remains always-already ‘the same’, identical to itself across time.³⁰

Identity, then, would appear to be insufficient as a term, not carrying the essential sense for our purposes of being necessarily linked to movement and changeability. Hall continues by discussing the more malleable notion of “identification.” Identification takes into account the fact that identities are “never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic,

²⁷ Ibid., p. 24. See the excellent work by Bruce Trigger, especially *The Children of Aataentsic: a History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montreal, 1976); *Natives and Newcomers: Canada’s “Heroic Age” Reconsidered* (Montreal, 1985).

²⁸ See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, England, 1991), pp. x–xi, 50–53. Also see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge), pp. 66–84.

²⁹ Delâge, Turgeon, *Transferts Culturels*, p. 39.

³⁰ Stuart Hall, “Who Needs Identity?” in Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans, and Peter Redman (eds), *Identity: A Reader* (London, 2000), p. 17.

discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.”³¹ These multiple constructions, attempting to find stability but constantly in flux, more aptly describe the identities discussed in this book. Judith Butler once formulated the idea that identifications “... are never full and finally made; they are incessantly reconstituted, and, as such, are subject to the volatile logic of iterability. They are that which is constantly marshaled, consolidated, retrenched, contested and, on occasion, compelled to give way.”³² In sum, attempts to formulate an identity, as in the early texts of New France, often lead to change, movement, or erosion.

Frenchness

This elusive, fleeting quality of identification, at the very moment of its attempted formulation, is a crucial element of “Frenchness” in this study. Recent scholarship presents the early-modern period as harboring nascent, rather than fixed, notions of what it meant to be part of France.³³ In this light, rather than efforts to place a rigid model of Frenchness on an American canvas, articulations of a New France become ways in which understandings of French identity are formed. Beyond a portrait of a distinct vision of identity transported to America, we have found a multitude of interpretations of what it meant to be French at the time, interpretations which were both confirmed and transformed by contact with the New World. New France is a place in which we see identities not simply transferred but also created. We use the term *transplantation* throughout, as this describes most aptly what certain French authors *hoped* New France could be. However, the shift explored here is more of a “transmutation”—a change through movement resulting in novelty—of visions of France to America.

³¹ Ibid., p. 17.

³² Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (London, 1993), p. 8.

³³ See, for example, Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, (London, 1992). Greenfeld discusses notions of collective identity in terms of process. In addition, we should note that most modern visions of “national” identities posit that early-modern states do not fit into current categories simply because of the fact that for a majority of the population, regional or religious affiliations dominated a sense of collective national identity. Also see Etienne Balibar, “La forme nation: Histoire et idéologie,” in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (eds), *Race, nation, classe. Les identités ambiguës* (Paris, 1997), pp. 38–56. An interesting look at the relationship between local and national identities is Peter Sahlin, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, 1989). We must, then, remember that the notions of identity posited in our texts remain those of a literate elite. For a clear synthesis of current work on French identity at this time, see David Bell, “Recent Works on Early Modern French National Identity,” *Journal of Modern History* 68 (March 1996): 84–113; also see Bell’s excellent *The Cult of the Nation in France* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001).

Explanations and Outline

What Was New France?

Canada, for various reasons, was unique among French external undertakings at this time. First, while other contemporary French ventures in Asia, the Mediterranean, and Africa were almost exclusively commercial, New France was the site of attempted settlement. As stated above, the signing of the Edict of Nantes in 1598 to end the French Wars of Religion—during which the kingdom had concentrated heavily on internecine conflicts—led to a period of renewed interest in colonial efforts. This fact, along with the desire to rival France’s Iberian enemies in American settlement, meant that the project of New France encompassed novel goals of colonial establishment. Second, New France was in some ways a return to earlier concerns. In fact, “*Nouvelle-France*” referred to French interests in Northeastern America as early as 1525. It is Francis the First’s envoy, Giovanni da Verrazano, paradoxically an Italian, who is credited with having coined the term. It fell into disuse until the colonial renewal of the early seventeenth century. However, it is relatively certain that the term “*Nouvelle-France*” was not used for parts of the world other than Canada.³⁴ Sixteenth-century attempts at settlement in Brazil were called “*La France Antarctique*,” and Urbain Chauveton’s account of the 1566 Spanish massacre of the French in Florida cites the Spanish as questioning French legitimacy in Canada or “*votre Nouvelle-France*” [your New France].³⁵ Thus, a site that had long been called New France for various reasons was propitious, in the early seventeenth century, for attempts to fulfill the promise of the name through settlement.³⁶

Previous treatments of a “New France” have generally approached the subject within larger studies of European empires, and in one of two ways. First, many tend to see it as a direct administrative extension of the metropolis.³⁷ Although

³⁴ Biard believes the name could possibly, with enough hard work, extend from the Atlantic to the China Sea. See Thwaites, vol. 3, pp. 42–3.

³⁵ In Chauveton’s *Brief discours et histoire d’un voyage de quelques françois en la Floride* [Document électronique]: & du massacre autant injustement que barbarement executé sur eux, par les Hespagnols, l’an mil cinq cens soixante cinq printed in Girolamo Benzoni, *Histoire nouvelle du nouveau monde* [Document électronique]: contenant en somme ce que les Hespagnols ont fait jusqu’à présent aux Indes Occidentales, & le rude traitement qu’ils font à ces povres peuples la / extraite de l’italien de M. Hierosme Benzoni, . . . qui a voyagé XIII ans en ces pays la. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France: NUMM-52185).

³⁶ For discussions of Verazano, other French endeavors, and Protestant voyages, see Jacques Mathieu, *La Nouvelle-France: Les Français en Amérique, XVI–XVIIe siècles* (Quebec, 1991); Marcel Trudel, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (5 vols. Montreal, 1963); Frank Lestringant, *Le Huguenot et le sauvage. L’Amérique et la controverse coloniale en France au temps des Guerres de Religion (1555–1589)* (Paris, 1990).

³⁷ See, for example, Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World* (New Haven, 1995).

Richelieu hoped to make this true, and it became so once Jean Baptiste Colbert controlled the destiny of French colonies, such views do not explore the earlier possibilities for various interpretations of what New France signified. A second look at the name New France, usually in history textbooks, traces it historically from its inception with Verrazano.³⁸ In neither case are the implications discussed of what an attempted transplantation of France to America might have meant.³⁹

Why These Years?

Without the application of chronological limits, this subject would be unmanageable. To address the totality of visions of New France, in a literature spanning nearly two centuries, would be too vast a project. Thus we have chosen to examine early visions of the colony; the frontiers of this study run from 1604–36. Four additional reasons justify this choice. First, to seek an understanding of what its conception implied, one should logically be looking at the moment when sustained interest in New France was “new.” Second, these first texts hold the richest and most enthusiastic discussions of New France, due to the excitement of renewed French overseas exploration following the aforementioned stagnation caused in large part by the Wars of Religion. Third, the major debates as to what New France meant were established in these early writings, to be renewed and reworked throughout the seventeenth century. Fourth, and perhaps most important, in these early years, the possibilities for the colony were much more open than after 1636. The publication in 1604 of Champlain’s first *Voyage* marks the beginning of renewed established interest in the New World by various groups in France; 1636 marks the end of this multiplicity of voices, the last example of which is Gabriel Sagard’s *Histoire du Canada*. Following this, the Jesuit *Relations*, begun in 1632, would in effect dominate most voices coming from New France until their waning in 1673.⁴⁰ This domination was the fruit of intricate political, and more importantly, textual, positioning, as recent work has shown.⁴¹ We must also note here the beginnings

³⁸ A case in point, although a very interesting and complete one, is Jacques Mathieu’s aforementioned *La Nouvelle-France*.

³⁹ A third current, that of New France in relation to the formation of modern Canada, can be seen in such recent studies as Peter N. Moogk, *La Nouvelle-France: The Making of French Canada-A Cultural History* (East Lansing, 2000), and Leslie Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997).

⁴⁰ This is not to imply that following 1636 New France ceased to produce non-Jesuit texts. However, the dominance, quantity, and power of Jesuit writings tended to overshadow other voices. The Recollect Christian Leclercq’s 1691 *Premier Etablissement de la Foi dans la Nouvelle France* is an attempt to establish the primacy of his order over the Jesuits, a battle begun with Sagard.

⁴¹ Réal Ouellet and Alain Beaulieu, in *Rhétorique et conquête missionnaire: le jésuite Paul Lejeune* (Quebec, 1993), establish the importance of textual rhetoric to creation a heroic vision of the self in the *Jesuit Relations*.

of serious official involvement in New France, with the founding by Richelieu, in 1627, of the *Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France* in order to control the destiny of the colony. Our discussion might have ended with this year, had the state continued to shape the colony with the fervor envisioned by Richelieu. However, it is not until Colbert that close state control would prevail in New France. Nonetheless, the possible definitions of a New France were essentially linked after 1636 to official policy and the writings in the *Relations*. In our time period, however, the possible visions of a *Nouvelle-France* were multiple.

Why These Writers?

Once we have asserted that New France was more than a name, we must then ponder how many different definitions could have been assigned the term. In other words, what were the numerous different kinds of “imaginaries” travelling to the colony? The history of French colonization is largely a history of competition. It would be inaccurate to imagine that various groups vying for control of New France in the early seventeenth century shared a common vision of what “France” meant, and therefore of what attempts at transatlantic implantation would signify. In France, there were roughly three groups, diverse among themselves, interested in the colonization of North America: the Church, the merchants, and the state. We will focus on the writings of Christian and merchant authors, who were essentially left to their own devices in this early period. Richelieu notes, upon the creation of his own *Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France* in 1627–28, that earlier ventures had been “assisted but poorly” by the state.⁴²

Canadian schoolchildren still learn that New France was founded on “fur, fish, and the faith,” indicating that the missionaries and the merchants were the *hommes de terrain* of this colonizing process.⁴³ These groups had divergent and interdependent interests. The missionaries depended on the first contact of the merchant traders for introductions to the natives. Merchants attracted groups of Amerindians, making conversion easier. James Axtell reminds us that “missionaries were expected to build their spiritual edifices on the inroads made by copper pots, wool blankets, and glass beads.”⁴⁴ Conversely, the merchants required the missionaries’ services, for once regular trade with the inland natives began, religion was a necessary tool for the establishment of order and “civility.”⁴⁵ In addition,

⁴² Cited in Charles W. Cole, *French Merchantilist Doctrines Before Colbert* (New York, 1931) p. 179. Also, the state found its interests in an amalgam of the ideas of these two groups. Until the establishment of Richelieu’s company, however (and even after this time), the state demonstrated enormous reluctance to fund overseas expansion.

⁴³ James Axtell, *The Invasion Within* (New York, 1985), p. 23. As for the “fish” portion of this adage, fisheries were the impetus for original voyages to Canada. For our purposes, however, fishermen had little interest in establishing a New French entity in America.

⁴⁴ Axtell, *Invasion*, p. 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

missionaries added an aura of respectability to commercial ventures.⁴⁶ Where they diverged, of course, was in their motivations. Missionaries were inspired by the conversion of souls and the creation of a stable, Christian population in the region. The merchants, in turn, had little interest in native salvation, and the establishment of permanent settlements was a burden they did not relish. Each royal monopoly given to a company in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stipulated that the merchants were to transport and establish colonists in the New World. For example, *La Compagnie de Montmorency pour la Nouvelle France*, established in 1621, agreed to transport six families of three members each per year, and to replace colonists that died.⁴⁷ Their failure to do so—they saw settlers as a hindrance to their enterprise—was one of the main reasons for the termination of their fur-trade monopoly in New France.

Under the rubric “Christian,” we have placed an extremely diverse group of authors from disparate backgrounds, and pursuing multifarious goals. This group held the most prolific writers, and the trace of their early travels to New France demonstrates varied and often competing visions of transplanting France in the New World. In 1606, the lawyer Marc Lescarbot held great hopes for the establishment of a Christian French colony in America. As we noted earlier, the revocation of the monopoly held by the leader of his expedition, Pierre du Gua de Monts, in 1607, was a great disappointment. This setback led the author to compose, on the advice of friends, his *magnum opus*, *L'Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*. The text includes six books, the first three of which treat past French voyages, the fourth Lescarbot's tenure in Canada, the fifth the advancements since his departure, and the sixth native mores. The *Histoire* is one of the most eloquent early defenses of French colonial involvement and the establishment of a Christian French entity in the New World. Samuel de Champlain, the best known of these writers, spent a large portion of his life struggling for the establishment of a permanent French settlement in Canada. His writings are those of a practical individual focused on a clear, singular goal: the establishment, with himself as its leader, of a French Catholic colony in North America. We will be using Champlain's first through third voyages (1604–12), prior to the beginnings of his administrative duties. In 1608, Pierre Biard was chosen as one of the initial two Jesuit missionaries to New France. Biard is the first in a long line of Jesuit authors who would write, in the *Relations*, until 1673, the difficulties of conversion in New France.⁴⁸ These writings constitute an indispensable tool for any student of French Canada. For our purposes, Biard is an author who draws some of the most striking and direct parallels between France and its American namesake. Other Jesuits treated include Paul Lejeune, founder of the Canadian mission, who authored or contributed to

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁷ Cole, p. 112.

⁴⁸ Although the actual *Relations* are considered to begin in 1632, Biard's writings are included in the early volumes (1–3) of the Thwaites edition (see above) of the Jesuit missives.

the first eleven *Relations*. We will also look at Jean de Brébeuf, originator of the Huron mission and one of New France's primary linguists, who spent fifteen years among the natives and authored the *Relations* of 1635 and 1636. His reflections on language are central to New France in general. In addition to the Jesuit missionaries, we will discuss Gabriel Sagard, known primarily as the author of the *Grand voyage du pays des Hurons* (1632) and *L'Histoire Du Canada* (1634–36). Sagard spent a little more than a year in Huron country between 1623 and 1624. When his Franciscan Recollect order was forced out of the colony in favor of the Jesuits in 1629, Sagard was asked to detail the work of his brethren in Canada. The *Grand Voyage* is considered by many scholars as one of the most complete early treatments of the natives' daily life and customs.⁴⁹ Our study will focus on an appendix to this text, his *Dictionnaire [sic] de la Langue Huronne* (1632), in which he attempts a fascinating linguistic colonization of the Hurons.⁵⁰

What of the merchant voice? The preceding texts have in common their fundamentally Christian vision of colonization, in which the New World was desperately in need of conversion and civilization. The French, perhaps more than any other European nation, conceived the New World as a place to be transformed in their own image. It is evident, however, that French colonial expansion, despite the pious missionary tone of most royal edicts on the subject, was not exempt from—was certainly even fueled by—economic interests. An example comes in one of the most ambitious colonial trade projects of the seventeenth century, du Noyer's *Royale Compagnie française du S. Sepulchre de Hierusalem*. The preface to the outline of the project, in which the state was to be an active partner, echoes the crusading tone of the company's title. In the practical articles noting the members' proposed activities, however, trade and commerce dominate. It is only in article 18 that the company agrees to "... establish free schools, hospitals, veterans' homes, colleges, *seminaries* [my emphasis], poorhouses, and other institutions in France and in the colonies."⁵¹ In relation to New France, we need only remember that missionary development was little more than an afterthought in the early century when the St. Lawrence was considered the key to a Northern route to China and its trade riches.

This nascent capitalism, or merchant vision of colonial expansion, is in direct contradiction with a Christian view. The inconsistency between word and practice noted above is symptomatic of France's ambiguous relationship to economic development. Indeed, the French *noblesse* was for many centuries forbidden to engage in so-called dishonorable commercial practices, risking the loss of noble status if they did. The contradiction between the perceived evils of commerce and the rise of capitalism is intriguing when included in the question of which France

⁴⁹ See Réal Ouellet and Jack Warwick's introduction to the 1990 edition of the *Grand Voyage* (Quebec, 1990).

⁵⁰ An indispensable tool for this information is George W. Brown (ed.), *Dictionary of Canadian Biography I: 1000–1700* (Toronto, 1966).

⁵¹ Cole, *French Merchantilist*, p. 117.

people wished to transplant to the New World.⁵² It is in relation to this controversy that, in our final chapter, we will examine metropolitan merchant authors who treat colonial expansion. In relation to Champlain and Lescarbot, two of the merchant traders' most fervent enemies, we will read Barthélemy de Laffemas, *Contrôleur Général des Finances* under Henri IV and author of several economic treatises and pamphlets, and Antoine de Montchrétien, author of the *Traité de l'Oeconomie Politique* (1615). Juxtaposing these authors in relation to the advent of a New France presents as a question of collective identity the discomfort France felt with fully embracing new economic systems.

In this competitive climate, the writings of early New France contain a fundamental debate on what it meant to transplant France to America and, by extension, a debate on what "Frenchness" might have meant at the time. The general questions informing each textual discussion are the following: what, for these authors, did it mean to plant a New France? What elements did they include, and which did they eliminate in the crossing of the ocean? What did contact with the New World add, or reinforce, in the French vision of themselves? Since America and its inhabitants did not constitute a blank slate, how were traditional visions of France transformed by contact with the New World? What emerge as the major indicators of "Frenchness" in these texts? What were the perceived threats to French identity in the meeting between France and Canada? What were the implications for native peoples of French visions of both Amerindians and themselves? These questions produced numerous answers and occasional confusion among those who set out to recreate a France, or Frances, in North America.⁵³

Where Are We Going?

We will examine several versions of New France. These treatments, which have in common the difficulties of this attempted conversion, are divided into two sections. The first, entitled "Land and Language," including Chapters 1 and 2, deals with identity and the practical aspects of the encounter with the New World: geography and communication. The second section, entitled "Renewal and Religion" including Chapters 3 and 4, treats more abstract notions of the self through efforts to integrate and use the New World in reclaiming, regenerating, or reinforcing ideas of Frenchness.

There is an important facet of this subject that we have not yet addressed: that of New France's competitors. As the two major powers in the Northeastern United

⁵² In relation to this controversy, see Erica Harth, *Ideology and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France* (Ithaca, 1983).

⁵³ See Gary Nash, *Red White and Black: The Peoples of Early North America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974), p. 4: "Our task is to discover what happened when people from different continents, diverse among themselves, came into contact with each other at a particular point in history." It is important that Nash stresses the fact that Europeans traveled to America not as a monolithic unit but as diverse subjects with various concerns.

States in the seventeenth century, we will compare the French to the British.⁵⁴ The majority of our chapters assume a comparative view of the concerns we discuss, placing French notions against those of their British American neighbors to the South.

Chapter 1, entitled “Changing Winter into Wine,” looks at the initial encounter between colonists and land. Coming to America, many travelers had longstanding beliefs in what they would find, beliefs which were essential to the possibility of creating a New France. The reality, however, was strikingly different. Thus, how does one take a land that is patently not a New France due to its frigid and inhospitable climate and make it so? The answer found by Lescarbot and Champlain to this challenging question is the first major formulation of the difficulties in establishing a *Nouvelle-France* worthy of the name in America.

Chapter 2, entitled “Translating the New World,” looks at language, conversion, and identity. The French initially sought to convert the Amerindians to Catholicism using native tongues and had clearly optimistic expectations concerning the ease with which this could be carried out, fueled by a belief in a universal language of God. As encounters became more sustained, however, the linguistic gap became increasingly apparent, with consequences for the French vision both of the Amerindians and of themselves. In an attempt to gain perspective on the specificities of the French relationship to language, this section concludes with a look at British notions of the American linguistic barrier.

Chapter 3 is entitled “*Nos ancêtres les Américains*.” Marc Lescarbot sought in the New World an extension of his humanist beliefs in progress, Amerindian purity, and possibilities for the cleansing of “Frenchness.” Lescarbot’s disappointment in modern France leads to a historical rewriting of American and French pasts. By uniting French history with that of the American Indians, Lescarbot’s is quite possibly the most original use of the term *New France* and one which transforms “Frenchness” as it attempts to transform the New World. Beyond reading Lescarbot’s work as a humanist attempt to comprehend the natives, however, we will examine his use of the aboriginal peoples of America as an extension of a project, the result of which is the erasure of the specificities of the Other.

Finally, Chapter 4, entitled “Religion, Commerce, and Revised Identity,” takes a threefold look at how the New World challenged notions of Frenchness, through an examination of the past, the present, and the future. The problematic of this chapter begins with the association of two major notions: Christianity and mercantilism. The first, a traditional marker of French identity, and the second, one of the principal motors of seventeenth-century empires, logically clashed. We will first examine Pierre Biard, Sagard, and Lescarbot’s quarrel over religious primacy in the New World as an articulation of the ancient vision of France as “la nation la plus chrétienne” [the most Christian of nations]. How was France’s time-honored

⁵⁴ Of course, the Dutch were also present, but their rapid rise and fall, from 1621 to 1673, makes them a bit of an exception, along with the fact that the stock of Dutch texts is minor in relation to the French and the British.

view of herself transformed by contact with America? What opportunities for and threats to this vision arise in the New World? The second part of the chapter studies Lescarbot and Champlain in relation to the merchants. We will discuss the vision of New France as a Christian colony in relation to divergent voices in the form of Barthélémy de Laffemas's writings and Antoine de Montchrestien's *Traité de l'Oeconomie Politique*, mentioned above. In the face of emergent capitalism, how do certain authors react? The question of whether France was to become a mercantile colonial power raised ancient problems as to the basic evil of money and all things commercial, all notions which placed the aforementioned vision of the most Christian nation into question. Was there a possibility for reconciliation between a mercantile France and a Christian one? Was it possible to refuse the seemingly inevitable march of commerce? How did France, in wishing to replant itself in the New World, treat the problems of identity inherent in overtly accepting commerce? In the third portion of this chapter, we will examine the British relationship to commerce as a counter example to the French.

It is evident that the New World and its inhabitants were not forced into a reflection of France, despite French efforts in this direction. America and its natives were perpetually resistant to efforts towards cultural transformation, a fact which would become increasingly apparent as the European colonial projects advanced. In addition, it should be clear from the preceding discussion that what "Frenchness" implied was far from fixed at the time. What emerges out of these early considerations of national transplantation, more than a picture of a solidly implanted American France, are the multitudinous, malleable, and contradictory notions of French identity, and the effects America had on them at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

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PART 1

Land and Language

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Chapter 1

Changing Winter into Wine

J'ay voulu toucher le fruit de la vigne, en consideration de ce que la Nouvelle-France en est heureusement pourveue.

[I have thought good to mention the fruit of the vine, by reason that New France is plentifully furnished therewith.]

—Marc Lescarbot, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*

A New France?

In 1634, the Jesuit Superior Paul Le Jeune wrote to Richelieu from Quebec, describing himself and his fellow missionaries as “... un petit nombre de personnes logées au bout du monde” [. . . a small number of people lodged at the end of the earth].¹ This admission of the radical alterity of New France is contrary to what many previous authors, Le Jeune included, had attempted to demonstrate in earlier accounts.² It implies an almost impenetrable geographical and conceptual distance between France and its American namesake. In fact, the majority of writers prior to this wished to create, as we saw in our introduction, a *rapprochement* between the two worlds. Le Jeune’s words come from experience, and a collective knowledge acquired from over thirty years of nearly continuous contact between the French and America.³ It is, in some senses, a confession of defeat.⁴

This chapter treats the time prior to Le Jeune’s statement, when French authors who encountered America’s geography, climate, and inhabitants were still able to believe, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, in the theoretical feasibility of a true New France. Formulated differently, this is a study of the attempt to render true a collective desire, and the rhetorical processes by which this desire was articulated.

¹ Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (73 vols, Cleveland, 1896–1901), vol. 7, pp. 240–41. Citations refer to French then English translation.

² See, for example, the introduction by Réal Ouellet and Alain Beaulieu in *Rhétorique et conquête missionnaire: Le jésuite Paul Lejeune* (Sillery, 1993).

³ I omit Cartier’s earlier contact because, as we will see below, many of the authors ignored the information concerning climate differences contained in his *Voyages*.

⁴ It is a veiled complaint that despite a written recommendation from Richelieu, LeJeune believes that the merchants in charge of aiding the missionaries will not keep their financial promises.

The encounter with America is most often treated as an encounter between peoples. While this is certainly the most dramatic, complex, and far-reaching realm of the colonial past, it tends to overshadow another remarkable shock: the clash with geography. This meeting is one that is far less documented than the European-Amerindian relationship, but it is equally as crucial in our understanding of early-modern colonial mentalities, and it ultimately fashions a great deal of the notions informing the aforementioned human conflicts. Whether it was the sweltering *zone torride* or freezing Northeastern America, the first disconcerting confrontation with the New World was often between Europeans and land. This early acquaintance and its consequences thus logically comprise the subject of our opening chapter.

The French arrived in America with assumptions about geographical and climactic similarities and a wish to find a land similar to their own. We saw in the previous section the Jesuit Pierre Biard's proclamation of New France as a "... terre jumelle avec la nostre ... située en mesme climat" [... twin land to ours ... having the same climate].⁵ On one level, Biard is aiming to remove some of the unfamiliarity of the new continent and its people in order to garner support and lure colonists. On another level, however, he is simply working on the early-modern assumption that similar latitude led to similar climate conditions. Virginia was expected to resemble southern Spain, and Newfoundland to have roughly the same moderate climate as London or Paris.⁶

America, however, quickly put these views to the test, making it increasingly difficult to claim complete symmetry between France and New France. As early as the voyages of Jacques Cartier, the French would pay the price for such geographical conjectures. During his first voyage, in 1534, the explorer compared Canada's climate to that of Spain and mocked the Amerindians who warned him of the rigors of the American winter. Lescarbot comments on Cartier's ignorance, noting that if the voyager was able to maintain his illusions temporarily "... il se peut faire que par accident il y fasoit fort chaud quand il y fut, qui étoit au mois de Juillet [... it may well be that it chanced to be very hot during his stay, which was in the month of July].⁷ Upon his return to Canada in the following year, winter was to take him by surprise. During the disastrous *hivernage* of 1535–36, he lost one quarter of his men.

⁵ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 3, pp. 32–3.

⁶ On climate differences and conceptual difficulties with them, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "The Puzzle of the American Climate in the Early Colonial Period," *The American Historical Review* 87/5 (1982): 1262–89. Also see two articles by Frank Lestringant: "Europe et la théorie des climats dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle," in *Actes du colloque sur La Conscience européenne au XV^e et au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1982), pp. 206–26; and "Champlain, Lescarbot et la 'Conférence' des histoires," in Alain Niderst (ed.), *Scritti sulla "Nouvelle-France" nel Seicento* (Bari, Paris, 1984), pp. 67–88.

⁷ Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France/Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, trans. and ed. H.P. Biggar and W.L. Grant (3 vols, Toronto, 1907), vol. 2, pp. 391, 7. References to Lescarbot show page numbers of the French, then of the English translation.

In our period, and despite the information contained in Cartier's *Voyages*, Champlain was to have the same experience in 1604 at Sainte-Croix, when a miscalculation of winter conditions cost his crew dearly. He relates that "Il étoit mal-aisé de recognoistre ce pays sans y auoir yuerné, car y arriuant en été tout y est fort agreable, à cause des bois, beaux pays & bonnes pescheries de poisson de plusieurs sortes que nous y trouuasmes" [It was difficult to know this country without having wintered there; for on arriving in summer everything is very pleasant on account of the woods, the beautiful landscapes, and the fine fishing for the many kinds of fish we found there].⁸ Soon, though, "... l'yuer nous supris plustost que n'esperions" [... winter came upon us sooner than we expected].⁹ After several months of death and disease, nearly half of his men had perished. The experience seems to have shaken even this most stoic of French explorers.¹⁰

Despite these empirical encounters with the American climate, authors continued to present the belief that the harsh colonial weather was localized and that negative experiences were limited. Discussing what is modern-day Massachusetts, Champlain notes that "... nous ne peusmes sçauoir si la neige étoit de l'oge duree. Je tiens neãtmoins que le pays est tempere, et que l'yuer n'y est pas rude" [... we were unable to ascertain whether the snow lasted a long time. I consider, however, that this country is temperate and the winter not severe].¹¹ This appeared logical to Champlain, as the region, between 40 and 45 degrees latitude, is roughly on the same plane with northern Spain.

These misjudgments result from inexperience with the American climate, and a general belief that exceptions to the rules of climate theory were just that: exceptions. Describing the winters of 1605 and 1607, Champlain notes that "... l'hyuer ne fut si grand que les annees precedents, ny les neiges ne furent si long temps sur la terre" [... the winter was not so long as in the preceding years, nor did the snow remain so late upon the ground].¹² Champlain's original expectations are thus temporarily restored by the mild nature of subsequent experiences. Likewise, Lescarbot finds reasons for exceptional weather which ease his apprehensions about the Canadian climate. Discussing the dangerous ice banks in *Terre Neuve*, he advances that

On se pourroit étonner, & non sans cause, pourquoy en meme parallele il y a plus de glaces en cette mer qu'en celle de France. A quoy je répond que les glaces que l'on rencontre en cette-dite mer ne sont pas toutes originaires du climat, c'est-

⁸ Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain/Oeuvres* (6 vols, Toronto, 1922–35), vol. 1, p. 307. French and English appear on the same pages in this edition.

⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 301

¹⁰ This is the sense one has in reading the very graphic descriptions of cold, suffering, and scurvy in the *Voyages* concerning this winter. See Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, ch. 6.

¹¹ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 352

¹² Ibid., vol. 1, p. 447. The winter of 1607 was a cheerful one for the group, as we will see below.

à-dire de la grand'baye de Canada, mais viennent des parties Septentrionales poussées sans empechement parmi les plaines de cette grande mer, par les ondées, bourrasques & flots *impetueux* que les vents d'Est & du Nort élevent en hiver & au printemps.

[One might wonder, and not without cause, why there is more ice in this sea than off the coast of France, since they are in the same parallel. My answer is that the icebergs met with in that said sea do not originate in that region, that is to say, in the great bay of Canada, but come from the North, driven without hindrance on the expanse of this wide sea by the billows, squalls, and furious waves raised in winter and spring by the east and the north winds, which drive them toward the South and the West.]¹³

The violent, “furious”—*impetueux*—cold is a product of another place, which allows Lescarbot to continue envisioning Canada as a mild New France.

Practically speaking, these travelers had little knowledge of the differences between America's continental climate and Europe's oceanic weather patterns. In both instances, the atmosphere is heated by air emanating from the land or sea below. The general west–east movement of air masses means that the temperature on America's east coast is heated or cooled from the land, and Europe's west coast by air emanating from the sea. Since land absorbs and releases heat much more quickly than does water, the American climate is subject to greater extremes of hot and cold in summer and winter. In short, the sea air keeps Western Europe mild, while the continental air renders Eastern America extreme in its two main seasons, winter and summer.¹⁴ Were Champlain alive today, this would be a modern climatologist's response to his laconically puzzled statement that “Il y a six mois d'yuer en ce pays” [There are six months of winter in this country].¹⁵

Climate and People

More important, though, were early-modern conceptions of just what *climate* meant. When Biard, Champlain, or Lescarbot used the word, they understood it in the sense of *climata*, referring to the parallel bands used by ancient authors to divide the world. Similar placement along these latitudinal lines was supposed to imply similarities in both weather and customs. Thus, not only was the land thought to be of similar constitution, but so were its people. Indeed, one cause of the extended French absence from America from the mid- to late sixteenth centuries, beyond the Wars of Religion, was the inhospitality of the climate as it related to the inhabitants. An inscription on a Descellier map from 1550 states that the failure of Roberval's

¹³ Lescarbot, *History of New France*, vol. 2, pp. 499, 228.

¹⁴ See Kupperman, “The Puzzle of the American Climate,” p. 1263.

¹⁵ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 307.

colony was due to native "... aloofness and the intemperance of the land."¹⁶ The two defects go hand in hand. In general, for early-modern Europeans, inhabitants of the *zone torride* in South America were considered naturally devilish and hot in nature, those living in more temperate climates to be of even constitution, while the frigid zones were thought to be uninhabitable by civilized beings.

This point is crucial. The 1606 edition of Jean Nicot's *Thresors de la langue française* defines *la zone torride* in the following manner: "Torride, *La zone torride*, Zona torrida. *C'est à dire, Aduste et rostie*" [Torrid, *the torrid zone*, zona torrida. That is to say, burned and cooked].¹⁷ On one level, Nicot is simply noting that the space between the two Tropics is hot; this appears logical. The key term in his definition, however, is *aduste*, which the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* defines as "Qui est brûlé, Il ne se dit que des humeurs qui sont dans le corps de l'homme. *Humeur aduste. sang aduste. bile aduste.*" [That which is burned. Used only for the humors contained in the human body. Burned humors. Burned blood. Burned bile].¹⁸

Lescarbot adheres to this parallel when he discusses various peoples in the final book of the *Histoire* dedicated to a comparative discussion of Amerindian mores: "... les peuples qui sont entre les Tropiques sont aussi plus dispos que les autres, participans d'avantage de la nature du feu que ceux qui en sont éloignez" [The tribes between the tropics are also more agile than the others, sharing more in the nature of fire than those farther off].¹⁹ The Tropical land and natives are fiery, while the colder zones, as Champlain notes, are "... de vrais deserts inhabitables d'animaux ..." [... very deserts, unfit for animals ...], let alone humans, due to "... l'excessif froid qu'il y fait . . ." [... the excessive cold there ...].²⁰

Tied up in this link between climate, people, and uninhabitability are all of the stakes of the colonial project. The desire to envision the American climate, and people, as similar to the French—or at least potentially so—crumbles if this connection cannot be demonstrated. One had to make the two places similar, and one had to believe it, because without this key piece, the colonial puzzle was impossible to assemble. Lescarbot's main stated desire is the following: "Le bien principal à quoy il faut butter, c'est l'établissement de la Religion Chrétienne en un païs où Dieu n'est point connu, & la conversion de ces pauvres peuples" [But the chief good one must aim at is the establishment of the Christian religion in a country where God is not known, and the conversion of these poor people].²¹

¹⁶ Cited in Olive Dickason, "The Sixteenth-Century French Vision of Empire," in Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (eds), *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective* (Toronto, 2001), p. 96.

¹⁷ Jean Nicot, *Thresor de la langue française* (Paris, 1606), p. 634. Consulted in the ARTFL database. (my translation)

¹⁸ *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 1st Edition (1694), p. 14. Consulted in the ARTFL database. (my translation)

¹⁹ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 3, pp. 379, 144.

²⁰ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 122.

²¹ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 6, pp. 443, 261.

If these people were to be converted, however, they needed to be susceptible to such change. In Chapter 3, we explore Lescarbot's desire to demonstrate the natives' fundamental similarity to the French in order to prove the possibility, bordering on necessity, of their conversion. The first step in this process, however, is the land. Champlain describes the inhabitants of the colder regions, stating a clear link between climate and "savage" practices. They are so reduced by the cold that "... ils sont presque constraints de se manger les uns les autres ... car les animaux et gibier de quoy ils vivent se retirent aux pays plus chauds" [... they are almost constrained to eat one another; for the animals and fowl on which they live migrate to warmer countries].²² Take the winter out of the country, and there is a possibility of taking the "savage" out of the people.

Land, Wine, and "Frenchness"

The symbolic importance of the land in the conversion of America to a New France is incalculable. This is essentially the first example of what we intend by the phrase "*writing a new France*": a land that is uninhabitable is patently not a New France, and therefore neither its climate nor, by extension, its people can be called such, so we must try and make it so in order to convince both metropolitan powerbrokers to help and to persuade ourselves of the viability of our project.

Enter wine as the perfect rhetorical tool. It is certainly striking that in a climate depicted as frigid, early French discussions of Northeastern America would contain numerous references to the presence of grapevines, a plant which so prefers a temperate climate.²³ Nonetheless, remarks such as Champlain's memory of "... de fort beaux raisins qui estoient à maturité" [... very fine grapes which were ripe], and the citation from Lescarbot preceding this chapter, are quite present in these writings.²⁴ Although these mentions of vines and their principal derivative, wine, may appear anecdotal, we argue that they hold a crucial place in these texts, a place linked directly to the desire to create a New France and to erase fundamental differences in climate and constitution between France and America.

In order to understand the function of these substances, we must remember that wine is primarily a product of conversion. From its most elementary level, that of the extraction of juice from a grape, to the spiritual realm of Christ's blood, wine's association with conversion is multifaceted. These connections render wine an effective symbolic tool for the transformation of the New World, both in the eyes of a metropolitan audience and for the authors themselves. The metamorphosis

²² Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 110.

²³ Barthes notes in "Le Vin et le lait" [Wine and Milk], in *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957), that "le vin est le suc du soleil" [wine is the juice of the sun], 74. (my translation) In the early-modern period, it is clear that wine for personal consumption was produced throughout France, from North to South, but the most reputed wines were produced in areas of temperate to warm climate.

²⁴ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 397.

of the grape to its refined liquid product, a liquid holding quasi-magical powers, reflects French efforts to convert the New World and its inhabitants. This process first looks to transform the frigid environment into one of warmth, its perceived savage population into civilized beings, and ultimately to fashion a New France out of the New World.

As we stated in our introduction, notions of “Frenchness” were often transformed or reinforced by contact with the New World. This is certainly the case with wine. In many ways the notion of wine as a French entity was nebulous at the time. It is clearly true that today, as Roland Barthes notes, “... wine is felt by the French nation as national property.”²⁵ The historian Georges Durand agrees when he writes that for France, “... wine imposes itself as the distinctive national reference.”²⁶ Roger Dion, author of one of the major works of wine history in France, advances that “The themes of vines and wine ... struck me by the beauty and the illustration they receive and the amplitude of their historical resonance.”²⁷

What of wine and “Frenchness” in this time period? On the one hand, early-modern literature presents numerous examples of wine as linked to a national sentiment. One has only to peruse late-medieval and early-modern French literature to have a sense of this. In the thirteenth century, Henri d’Andelli, in a poem entitled *La bataille des vins* [The Battle of the Wines], which pitted the wines of the world against those of France, proclaims that only among the French *breuvages*, “Chaque vin se fit plus digne,/Par son bon goût et sa puissance,/De bien abreuver le roi de France” [Each wine was more worthy/By its good taste and strength/To quench the thirst of the King of France].²⁸ Eustache Deschamps (c.1344–1406) denounces bad wine in a *rondeau* as the cause of death for one of France’s greatest heroes: “Roland en mourut” [Roland died from it].²⁹ In a ballad expressing his wish to come home following campaigns in Flanders, Deschamps laments that “Je suis perduz quant on ne bois pas de vin” [I am lost where people do not drink wine].³⁰ From here, the sixteenth century brings a felicitous example in Rabelais’s French monk Frère Jean in *Gargantua*, filled not with “amour divin” [divine love] but, rather, with “amour du vin” [love of wine], drinking from his hollow breviary and exclaiming “... que cent diables me sautent au corps s’il n’y a pas plus de vieux ivrognes que de vieux médecins!” [... may a hundred devils jump all over me if there are not more old drunks than old doctors in the world!].³¹

²⁵ Barthes, “Le Vin et le lait,” p. 74. (my translation)

²⁶ Georges Durand, “La Vigne et le vin” *Les Lieux de Mémoire III: Les France, II*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris, 1992), p. 797. (my translation)

²⁷ Roger Dion, *Histoire de la vigne et du vin en France des origines au XIX siècle* (Paris, 1977), p. vii. (my translation)

²⁸ In Sophie Guermès (ed.), *Le vin et l’encre: la littérature française et le vin du XIIIe au XXe siècle* (Bordeaux, 1997), p. 30. (my translation)

²⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

³⁰ Eustache Deschamps, *Œuvres Complètes*, Ballade DCCCLXXVII, ed. Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire (11 vols, Paris, 1878–1903), vol. 5, p. 58.

³¹ François Rabelais, *Gargantua*, ed. Guy Demerson (Paris, 1996), p. 297.

On the other hand, French wine was in competition with other European, especially Spanish, wines, and there is no real sense that the French at the time favored one over the other. The Spanish wines, for example, appear to have traveled better than the French. Lescarbot and Champlain both mention *vins d'Espagne* as being the most robust drink of all. Champlain notes that during the winter of 1604, "... nos boissons gelerent toutes, hormis le vin d'Espagne" [... our beverages all froze except the Spanish wine].³²

This is an additional aspect to the place of wine in these texts: as the descriptions of wine progress, they become increasingly linked to notions of Frenchness. The creation of a New France becomes linked to the vine, and this occasional symbol of national pride becomes much more clearly linked to what it is to be "French." The Frenchman as cultivator of both land and souls is created through a discussion of wine in these texts, a discussion born out of the need to reduce the difference between America's land and people and a notion of a "New France." Wine is thus a clear example of the reinforcement of identity outlined in our introductory section.

In a general sense, wine's relationship to conversion can be viewed in two principal fashions. This relationship is born out of the fact that wine is both process and product, potential and outcome. This distinction will prove crucial to our reading of these texts, as each author lends greater importance to one or the other of these aspects. First, vines and grapes hold the potential for wine, but human hands must produce the elixir. For Dion, a major facet of the nobility of the drink derives from the work of cultivation of the master trimmer, whose intelligent cuts of the vine produce a libation inspiring the pride of a nation. He reminds us that "... it is the winemaker himself and not the mineralogical composition of the soil that ultimately decides a wine's quality."³³ Without the work of man, vines are simply a common plant. Wine is thus a victory over nature.³⁴ The place of the wine producer is akin to that of the colonizer and missionary. It is this facet that Champlain explores, emphasizing the possibilities of the New World and his place in its amelioration.³⁵ It follows that he insists heavily on the aforementioned role of the cultivator in realizing said potential.³⁶ It takes a dedicated creator to convert the grape of America into an acceptable *breuvage*. His efforts, as we will

³² Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 306.

³³ Cited in Durand, "La Vigne et le vin," p. 788.

³⁴ This speaks of course to a more general concern of the French seventeenth century, voiced in the strikingly forceful lines from part VI of Descartes's *Discours de la Méthode*, in which he expresses the wish to "nous rendre maîtres et possesseurs de la nature." In René Descartes, *Oeuvres Philosophiques* (Paris, 1988), p. 634.

³⁵ As we will see, this potential remains unrealized more often than not.

³⁶ A major current in Champlain's text is placing himself as the best possible candidate for the founding of a flourishing colony. See, for example, Maurice Lemire, "Champlain: Entre l'objectivité et la subjectivité," in Niderst (ed.), *Scritti sulla "Nouvelle-France" nel Seicento*, pp. 41–57.

see, are thwarted, and he is unable to plant a fruitful vineyard in this country that he considers nearly beyond cultivation. Wine, however, is also a product, with a multitude of unique attributes. Barthes notes one of its many characteristics when he writes that wine "... is first and foremost a substance of conversion, capable of reversing situations and states, extracting from objects their opposites. It can make, for example, a weak man strong, and a taciturn man garrulous."³⁷ This power to "*extract from objects their opposites*" proves crucial in the New World. Wine as a product is free to exercise its magical powers of conversion. For a look at this face, we must turn to Lescarbot, who investigates the potential effects of the finished potion on this remote land. For the author of the *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, whose vision of the savagery of the continent and its inhabitants is less stern than Champlain's, wine is a facet of a larger project of assimilation rather than forced conversion.³⁸

Champlain: The Frustration of the Master Trimmer

Champlain's vision of wine is infused with the possibilities of Canada, of which he must convince those in the metropolis. Vines serve the pragmatic purpose of attracting royal support and colonists from France by rendering America less distant and savage. Champlain's use of wine is fascinating in relation to a defense of Canada's worth. In a world that might seem frigid and isolated in comparison to France, he has found a rhetorical tool to attract his compatriots; vines become a way to bring the two worlds together. Champlain includes an entry for "vignes" in the index to his *Voyages*, and several of his maps mark areas in which the future traveler can find grapevines. The first mention of vines comes as early as the beginning of the first *Voyage*, when the expedition stumbles upon "... forces vignes, qui apportent de beaux raisins en leur saison" [... abundance of vines, which in their season bear fine grapes]. Champlain notes that "... c'estoit les premiers qu'eussions veu en toutes ces costes" [... these were the first we had seen on any of these coasts], and concludes by stating, "Nous la nômasmes l'isle de Bacchus." [We named it the island of Bacchus].³⁹ In the absence of a Catholic deity in Canada, the Roman patron of drinking will do. It is clear in his *récits* that the presence of grapevines is a condition for the habitability of any area, and thus for the possibility

³⁷ Barthes, "Le Vin et le lait," p. 74. (my translation)

³⁸ For example, in Book I of the *History of New France*, Lescarbot notes that he uses the term *sauvage* simply because that is how the natives are "communément appelés," and advances reservations as to the validity of this appellation. Later, he notes that "on leur fait tort de les appeler barbares" [we do them a disservice in calling them barbaric]. See Lescarbot, vol. 3, p. 351. His relationship to the natives is equivocal, however, and it would be misleading to paint him simply as a culturally-sensitive observer, as we will see in Chapter 3.

³⁹ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, pp. 323–4. Lescarbot also cites this episode, but states that it is Cartier who named it *l'Île de Bacchus*. See Lescarbot, vol. 2, p. 391.

of a future colony. He notes the following, for example, during the explorations carried out for his 1608 voyage. Describing several unsavory islands near the coast of *l'Ile d'Orléans*, he affirms that, “Toute ceste coste, tant du nord que du Su, depuis Tadoussac jusques à l'isle d'Orléans, est terre montueuse & fort mauaise, où il n'y a que des pins, sappins, & bouleaux” [All this coast, both on the north and south sides, from Tadoussac to the island of Orleans, is hilly country and very poor, with nothing but pine, spruce, and birch].⁴⁰ In contrast, however, the following page contains a description of the northern side of the *Ile d'Orléans*. After affronting numerous geographical dangers, one arrives at “... le commencement du beau & bon pays de la grande riviere” [... here begins the fine, good country of the great river] in which we find “... quantité de beaux chesnes, & des noyers en quelques endroits; & à l'emboucheure des vignes & autres bois comme nous avons en France” [... many fine oaks and in some places nut-bearing trees, and at the extremity there are vines and other trees such as we have in France].⁴¹ Recounting an excursion to Iroquois territory, Champlain notes with regret that the wars between rival tribes have forced the evacuation of these areas “bien qu'ils soient plaisans” [although pleasant], with rivers “... environnees de nombre de beaux arbres, de mesmes especes que nous avons en France, avec forces vignes plus belles qu'en aucun lieu que j'eusse veu” [... on whose banks are many fine trees of the same varieties we have in France, with many of the finest vines I had seen anywhere].⁴²

Despite the links that Champlain makes in these comments between France and the New World, however, he is careful to note a difference between American vines and those of the Old World. It is here that the role of the cultivator emerges. In an early chapter of his first *Voyage*, Champlain cites the presence of “vignes sauvages,” and in a map included in the text, he alerts the traveler to the presence of a “Grande pointe de terre toute deffrichée horsmis quelques arbres fruitiers & vignes sauvages” [Large extension of land which was clear, save some fruit trees and savage vines].⁴³ The use of the word *sauvage*, so charged for early travelers, is no accident here. A further example is found in the portrait of an expedition to “la coste des Almouchiquois” [the coast of the *Almouchiquois*], when Champlain and his men find “... force vignes, ausquelles y avoit de fort beau grain, dont nous fismes de tresbon verjus” [... many vines, on which were exceedingly fine berries, and from these we made some very good juice].⁴⁴ Although it would seem that the explorer has extracted the potential from these grapes, it must be remembered that the liquid he describes here is a primitive, immature, and inferior form of the fruit's paramount nectar.⁴⁵ This place is thus in a state of unrealized promise. This

⁴⁰ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 2, p. 22.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 91.

⁴³ My translation, as it does not appear in the English version.

⁴⁴ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 329.

⁴⁵ The 1694 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* defines “Verjus” with the following entry: “Le jus, le suc qu'on tire de certains raisins, quand ils sont encore tout

is reinforced later when, on an expedition leaving from Port Royal, Champlain's party returns to the *Ile de Bacchus* where "... nous vismes des raisins ..." [... we saw grapes ...] which, "... estoient meurs & assez bons & d'autres qui ne l'estoient pas, qui avoient le grain aussi beau que ceux de France, & m'asseure que s'ils estoient cultivez, on en feroit du bon vin" [... were ripe and fairly good, and others which were not; they had a fruit as fine as those of France, and I am convinced if they were cultivated one could make good wine from them].⁴⁶ The condition "if they were cultivated" is the key to Champlain's understanding of New World potential, conveyed through the means of wine.

As Champlain continues to associate the process of viticulture and that of the colonizer, the role of the master trimmer and cultivator becomes clear. The explorer is known for his use of the rhetoric of agriculture as the key to civilization, and he is early New France's most attentive gardener. For example, he describes the leader of his 1604 expedition, de Monts, informing the natives "... qu'il desiroit habiter leur terre, & leur montrer à la cultiver, afin qu'il ne trainassent plus une vie si miserable qu'il ne faisoient" [... that he desired to settle in their country and show them how to cultivate it, in order that they might no longer lead so miserable an existence as they were doing].⁴⁷ The equation between colonization of savage peoples and agriculture is a common motif in this literature; the etymology of the words *colonus*, a farmer and a member of a newly conquered Roman settlement, and *colere*, to cultivate and inhabit a place, are similar, culminating in the dual meaning of *cultura*, which meant both to till the soil and to educate.⁴⁸ This is not a discourse limited to French texts. Las Casas, for example, makes the following analogy, "... since uncultivated soil produces only thistle and thorns but possesses the innate goodness to yield useful fruit if cultivated, so all manner of men, however barbaric or bestial, possess the use of reason and are capable of being taught."⁴⁹

Champlain understands colonization, and more precisely the place of the colonizer, in this way. Vines hold a major place in the articulation of his project for the fundamental reassurance they provide concerning America and the Americans' capability of "being taught." His vision of the Amerindians can be likened to the lands he finds at Quebec "... à mon opinion, si elles étaient cultivées, elles seraient bonnes comme les nôtres" [in my opinion, if this soil were tilled, it would be as good as ours].⁵⁰

America, however, appears rather resistant to his efforts. After the founding of the colony at Quebec in 1608, Champlain characteristically plants a garden.

verds. *Ces raisins-là sont bons qu'à faire du verjus, une pinte de verjus*" [The juice, the nectar taken from some grapes, when they are still quite green]. See the ARTFL database. (my translation)

⁴⁶ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 395.

⁴⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 295.

⁴⁸ See David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (Durham, 1993).

⁴⁹ Bartolomé de las Casas, *History of the Indies*, trans. and ed. Andrée Collard (New York, 1971), p. 5.

⁵⁰ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, p. 129.

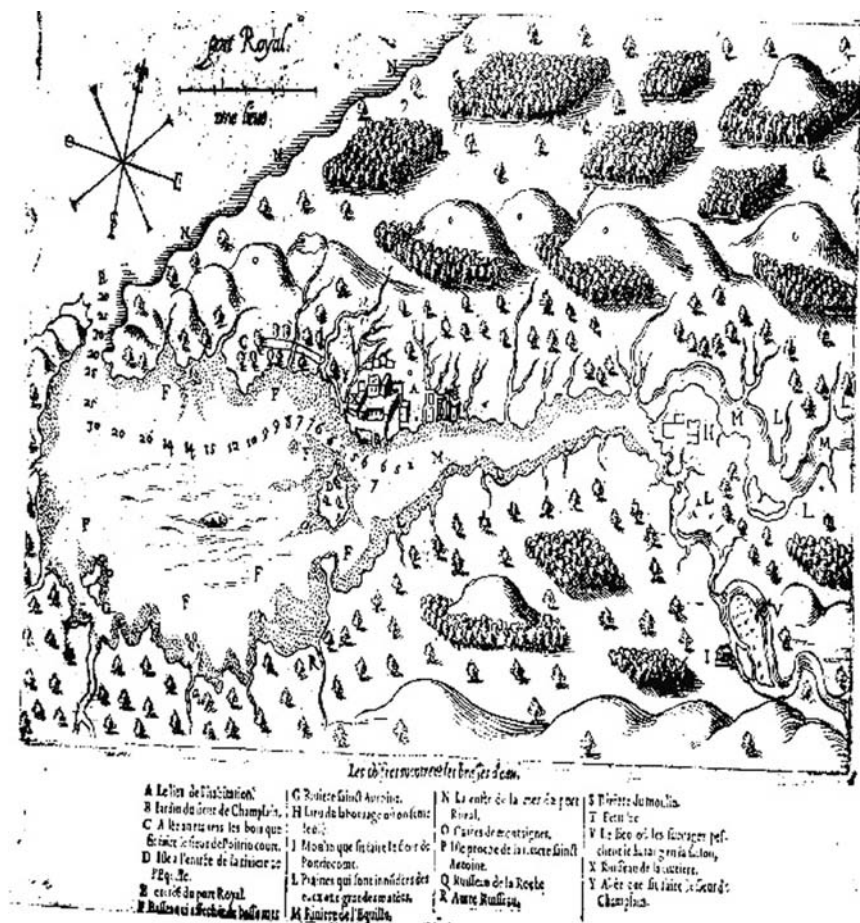


Fig. 1.1 Detailed drawing of Port Royal, including mention of Champlain's garden. From *The Works of Samuel Champlain* (7 vols., Toronto, 1922–35), vol. 1, p. 372. Image used with kind permission of the Champlain Society.

Among the plants he chooses, "... je fis planter des vignes du pays, qui vindrent fort belles" [I had some native vines planted and they prospered extremely well]. These native vines he has taken such care of, however, do not receive the same treatment when he leaves for a visit to France, for "... après que je fus party de l'habitation pour venir en France, on les gasta toutes, sans en avoir eu soing, qui m'affligea beaucoup à mon retour" [... after I left the settlement to come back to France, they were all ruined, for want of care, which distressed me very much].⁵¹ This occurs a second time when, upon the death of Henri IV, the leaders of the colony are forced

⁵¹ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 52.

to return to France in order to secure their position with the new order. They again leave their garden in the care of those who stay behind. Among other plants, he leaves "... des vignes que j'y avois fait planter durant mon yvernement" [... vines which I had planted there during my winter's stay], lamenting that those who had the care of the precious foliage,

... ne firent aucun estat de conserver: car à mon retour, je les trouvay toutes rompues, ce qui m'aporta beaucoup de desplaisir, pour le peu de soin qu'ils avoient d'un si bon & beau plan, dont je m'estois promis qu'il en reussiroit quelque chose de bon.

[... took no care to preserve ; for on my return I found them all broken down and was much displeased at the small account of care they had taken in the preservation of a good and fine plot, out of which I had hoped to get something worth while.]⁵²

Thus, for Champlain, vines are parallel to his unrealized hopes for New France. Georges Durand reminds us that traditionally the cultivation of wine was seen as the most noble of agricultural pursuits, demanding a precision and intelligence beyond that of the simple laborer. For Champlain, a utilitarian process of growth and cultivation will lead to the extraction of the necessary potion to transform the savage continent. The failure of the vines, then, can be seen as parallel to the failure, at least in the context of the *Voyages* we are discussing, of the colonial project. The reason he provides for this failure, that is to say the shortcomings of other colonists, also serves to position him as the choice candidate to head the establishment and administration of a colony.

Champlain's frustration goes beyond the failure of a garden. One of the main arguments for French and British colonization, in relation to Iberian dominance, was that of the Roman legal argument known as *res nullius*. As Anthony Pagden explains, *res nullius* "... maintained that all 'empty things,' which included unoccupied lands, remained the common property of all mankind until they were put to some, generally agricultural, use. The first person to use the land in this way became its owner."⁵³ A failure to do so is a denial of one's bipedal duty, according to Emeric de Vattel's *Le Droit de gens ou principe de la loi naturelle*, in which the author states:

... the cultivation of the soil not only deserves the attention of the a government because of its great utility, but in addition is an obligation imposed upon man by nature. Every nation is therefore bound by natural law to cultivate the land which has fallen to its share.⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid., vol. 2, p. 147.

⁵³ Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500–c.1800* (New Haven, 1995), p. 76. On *res nullius*, also see Olive Dickason, "The Sixteenth-Century French Vision of Empire," p. 89.

⁵⁴ Cited in Pagden, *Lords*, p. 78. Although this text of 1758 employs a decidedly eighteenth-century lexicon, many of its ideas are pertinent to Champlain's vision of agriculture as the duty of the civilized (French) man.

The stakes are thus quite high in the New World's resistance to Champlain's efforts to cultivate it, conveying both a national and human inadequacy. France cannot claim ownership of New France, and thus the colonial name is devoid of meaning, before working to cultivate its land.

Lescarbot and the "Warming" of Difference

Marc Lescarbot's use of grapes and wine is quite different from Champlain's and is based less on a discourse of unrealized potential and more on a renewal of wine's magical powers. The appearance of grapes and wine in the *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* is characterized by a return to the healing, assimilating, and unifying nature of wine. For Lescarbot, more than for Champlain, New France truly can become an *Ile de Bacchus*. Through a discourse of brotherhood, Lescarbot uses vines to draw clear parallels among the French, New France, and the Amerindians. In the end, Lescarbot treats wine as proof that his overarching desire to distill a New France out of this harsh continent is possible.

Thus, the actual product, rather than its ingredient, becomes important in Lescarbot. It is interesting to note that there are dozens of mentions of wine in *The Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, whereas Champlain discusses it only about ten times, focusing rather on the grapes and their cultivation. Lescarbot attributes to wine mystical qualities of reparation, rendering it almost medicinal. Let us return here to the effects of the harsh Canadian winters. One of the consequences of these times of want was scurvy. Cartier, Champlain, and Lescarbot to a lesser degree, witnessed the ravages of this affliction. For example, the losses incurred by Cartier in 1535–36 were extreme, as stated before. In 1604, Champlain's ranks were devastated by *scorbut*, or *la maladie de la terre*, "... de façon que de 79 que nous estions, il en moururent 35" [... so that of seventy-nine of us thirty five died]. Despite the efforts of the surgeons accompanying Champlain's expedition, "Nous ne pusmes trouver aucun remede pour la curation de ces maladies." [We could find no remedy with which to cure these maladies].⁵⁵ Lescarbot, however, ends his chapter on the subject with an "Avis de l'auteur sur le gouvernement de la santé & guerison desdites maladies" [Opinion of the author on the management of health and the curing of said diseases]. He imputes the cause of the disease to an unsavory diet, and notes that "il faut fuire," among other things, "... le gros vin & celui qui est trop delié" [... wine which is too strong or too small].⁵⁶ From here, he reminds us that "... c'est un axiome certain qu'il faut guerir un contraire par son contraire" [... it is an obvious axiom that opposites must be cured by opposites], and that beyond eating well, "... le bon vin pris selon la nécessité de la nature est un souverain preservatif pour toutes maladies, & particulièrement pour celle-ci" [... good wine, taken in such quantities as nature craves is a sovereign specific against all complaints, this one in particular].⁵⁷ While Champlain's descriptions of

⁵⁵ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, pp. 304–5.

⁵⁶ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 2, pp. 517, 261. It is important to note that Champlain was present during the voyage Lescarbot describes in this section of his text.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 521, 268–9.

wine discussed earlier remain in the domain of theory, Lescarbot adds the proof of what he advances:

Les sieurs Macquin & Georges, honorables marchans de la Rochelle, comme associez du sieur de Monts, nous en avoient fourni quarante-cinq tonneaux en nôtre voyage, dont nous nous sommes fort bien trouvez. Et noz malades mêmes ayans la bouche gatée, & ne pouvans manger, n'on jamais perdu le gout du vin, lequel ils prenoient avec un tuiau. Ce qui en a garenti plusieurs de la mort.

[Messrs. Macquin and Georges, honourable merchants of La Rochelle, partners of M. de Monts, had furnished us with forty-five hogs-heads which by no means came in amiss. And our patients, even though their mouths were sore, and they could not eat, never lost their taste for wine, but took it through a spout which saved several from death.]⁵⁸

Thus, wine here is a living, life-giving substance, and one that reverses the hostility of the American continent.

The preceding example involves wine brought from France. What of New World vines and their product? In the sixth book of his *Histoire*, dedicated to a detailed description of Amerindian mores, the function of wine is to aid in a process of assimilation. Lescarbot's first mention of American vines appears to parallel Champlain's vision of savagery. This appearance is reinforced when we read lines such as the following, in the chapter dedicated to "La Tabagie," or feast: "Je ne sçay si je doy mettre entre les plus grans aveuglemens des Indiens Occidentaux d'avoir abondamment les fruit le plus excellent que Dieu nous ait donné, & n'en sçavoir l'usage" [I am not sure whether I should place among the greatest blindnesses of the West Indians that they have in abundance the most excellent fruit that God has given us, and yet know not the use thereof].⁵⁹ Lescarbot does not chastise the natives for this in the manner of Champlain, however. Rather, he notes that the Gauls, whom he, along with many of his contemporaries, believes are the direct ancestors of the French, "... en étoient de même, & pensoient que les raisins fussent poison" [... were in the same state, and thought grapes to be

⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 521, 268. Champlain mentions this in passing.

⁵⁹ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 397, 175. Of course, once the natives did learn "l'usage" of alcohol, great difficulties arose. On this, see Richard White's *Middle Ground*, Chapter 3, in which he notes that Europeans had instilled a true dependency in the natives for brandy, such that it became a staple akin to blankets and gunpowder (p. 131). The Jesuit *Relations* discuss the effects of liquor, when for example, a rival tribe displays prisoners with violence, leading the European observer to declare that "Le rhum dont s'étaient gorgés les nouveaux maîtres, avait échauffé leurs têtes et irrité leur féroce naturelle" [The rum with which their new masters were filled had excited their brains and increased their natural ferocity]. See Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 70, pp. 124–5. Lescarbot demonstrates that wine perhaps had different effects when he discusses Membertou, a native *sagamos* (chief), who enjoys "... quelque bouteille de vin, lequel il aime, par ce (dit-il) que quand il en a beu il dort bien, et n'a plus de soin ni d'apprehension," [... a bottle of wine, whereof he is fond, because, says he, when he has drunk thereof he sleeps sound and has no further care or anxiety]. In Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 2, pp. 576, 355.

poison].⁶⁰ He proclaims that the terrain for understanding wine's powers exists in New France. Rather than lament native ignorance, Lescarbot describes their native version of wine, tobacco, "... dont ils prennent la fumée préque à toute heure" [... the smoke of which they inhale almost every hour].⁶¹ He notes, citing the Roman doctor Oribasius, the symmetry of uses between the two substances; wine is used to ensure that "... les digestions se font mieux, & s'engendre un bon sang" [... digestion proceeds better, and good blood and good nourishment are engendered through all parts of the body], while *petun*, or tobacco, is useful to "... échauffer cet estomach, & aucunement corrompre tant de crudités provenantes du poisson qu'ilz mangent" [... warm the stomach, and in some sort to destroy the many crudities proceeding from the fish they eat].⁶² In the same section, he writes that wine "réveille nôtre chaleur" [awakens our warmth], and that *tabac* is the guarantor of "la chaleur naturelle" [natural warmth] for the Amerindians. Thus, wine for Lescarbot provides a paradigm by which he can understand native customs, and a reassuring sign that the Amerindians could one day understand the powers of this beverage of civilization.⁶³ After all, while the natives can induce similar reactions with tobacco, ultimately, and here he cites Plato: "... ce qui échauffe l'ame avec le corps, c'est ce qu'on appelle vin" [... that which warms body and soul is that which is called wine].⁶⁴ By alluding to the soul here, Lescarbot reminds us of wine's primary metaphorical function in the Catholic world, and reinforces his call to those French who "... exposeroient volontiers leurs vies pour la conversion des peuples de delà" [... would willingly expose their lives for the conversion of the nations across the sea].⁶⁵

Finally, for Lescarbot, wine is a source of unity. Barthes discusses this quality when he writes that "... knowing how to drink is a national technique which serves to qualify the Frenchman."⁶⁶ An example is the description of "L'Ordre du Bon Temps" [The Order of Good Times], a society organized by Champlain in order to alleviate some of the difficulties of the Canadian winter. The difference between the two men is evident in their description of the function of this organization. While Champlain, as a leader of men, appears to see its utilitarian aspect of "keeping the troops happy," Lescarbot is more enthusiastic about its possibilities. Champlain provides a short paragraph describing the *Ordre*, albeit in more cheerful fashion than usual, in which he elaborates but little, "Nous passames cest yver for joyeusement, & fismes bonne chere, par le moyen de l'ordre du bon temps que j'y establis, qu'un chacun trouva utile pour la santé" [We spent the winter

⁶⁰ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 3, pp. 397, 175. See also our Chapter 3.

⁶¹ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 397, 176.

⁶² Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 397, 176.

⁶³ This is akin to what Anthony Pagden calls "the principle of attachment" in *European Encounters With the New World* (New Haven, 1993), and not far from Stephen Greenblatt's notion of "mimetic capital" in *Marvelous Possessions* (Chicago, 1991).

⁶⁴ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 3, pp. 398, 176.

⁶⁵ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 10, 236.

⁶⁶ Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 76. Durand also notes that "Fêtes" and "Confréries" are two of the entities inspired by wine (here the two are joined). See Durand, pp. 805–12.

quite pleasantly and had good fare by means of the Order of Good Cheer which I established, and which everybody found beneficial to his health].⁶⁷ Lescarbot, conversely, describes the order in depth. The group was structured, roughly, so that one member, designated by a ceremonial necklace, would be in charge of entertaining the others for one day. The host would make sure that his guests had "... gibier abondamment, Canars, Outardes, Oyes grises & blanches, perdris, alouettes ..." [... abundance of game, such as ducks, bustards, grey and white geese, partridges, larks ...], and numerous other meats.⁶⁸ Whereas wine is absent from Champlain's description, Lescarbot makes it the center of his discussion, when he notes that the "collier de l'Ordre" [collar of the Order] was transferred from new to old office holders with a glass of wine, "... & buvoient l'un à l'autre" [... and they drank to one another].⁶⁹ Again, this is parallel to Lescarbot's treatment of the natives, where wine is much like the native *petun*, which, as he says, in relation to our tradition of toasting, "... les Sauvages voulans fêtoyer quelqu'un, & lui montrer signe d'amitié, après avoir petuné, presentent le petunoir à celui qu'ils ont agreeable" [... the savages wishing to feast someone, and wishing to show him sign of amity, after having smoked, present the pipe to him whom they like best].⁷⁰ Rhetorically, then, Lescarbot treats the subjects of healing, assimilation, and unity through wine. Beyond Champlain's disappointment, the author of the *Histoire* is eager to infuse the New World with this unifying liquid.

France and Wine in European Context

The Spaniard Francisco López de Gómara characteristically notes, in his *Histoire générale des Indes occidentales* (1605), that the inhabitants of the New World were without "... writing, money, iron, grain, wine, and any animal larger than a dog."⁷¹ Much of Europe simply placed wine among the many qualities lacking in American natives.⁷² When they did discuss wine in America, it was often either in relation to the Indians' intolerance for alcohol, or in commercial terms, such as when Thomas Harriot notes that

There are two kinds of grapes that the soile doth yield naturally, the one is small and sowre, of the ordinary bigness as ours in England, the other farre greater and

⁶⁷ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 1, pp. 147–8.

⁶⁸ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 2, pp. 569, 343.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 569, 343.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 176, 397.

⁷¹ Cited in Olive Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton, 1984), p. 52.

⁷² The subject arises interestingly in texts concerning South America in relation to the Eucharist. Authors such as Jean de Léry (whom Lescarbot cites on the subject in the *Histoire*, vol 1, p. 319) discourse upon the merits of using native beverages in the absence of wine to perform this ceremony. See Andrea Frisch, "In a Sacramental Mode: Jean de Léry's Calvinist Ethnography," *Representations* 77 (Winter 2002): 82–106.

of himsele lushious sweet. When they are planted and husbanded as they ought, a principall commodity of wines by them may be raised.⁷³

This type of interest is certainly present in French minds as well. For France, however, the relationship to wine, and thus to its presence in the New World, is more complex than other nations. A French treatment of the drink such as the following statement from the Spaniard Las Casas is unlikely, when he notes that the American natives are used, "... with no more consideration than men use bread and wine and similar things, which merely by being used are consumed."⁷⁴ As a sign of "Frenchness," wine is intricately linked to the attempted transformation of Canada to a New France. There are many examples of French missionaries and colonists articulating their role specifically in terms of viticulture. An illustration comes in a letter from the Jesuit Pierre Biard to his superior, in which he notes that his predecessor can return to France confident in Biard's success, "... sans le regret d'abandonner une vigne qu'il auroit plantée." [... without the regret of leaving a vine which he has planted].⁷⁵ We see another example, in which is illustrated the French conviction that cultivation of wine was a clear symbol of superior civilization, when Paul Le Jeune recounts the natives drinking unclean water from an unwashed kettle "... avec autant de contentement qu'on boiroit en France d'un vin fort excellent dans un verre de crystal" [... with as much satisfaction as you would in France drink excellent wine from a crystal glass].⁷⁶ Nowhere is the link between France and New France through wine clearer than in Champlain and Lescarbot. For Champlain, grapes are a sign of both Canada's savagery and its potential, and a witness to France's failure in cultivating this land and its people. For Lescarbot, on the other hand, the New World appears to have created a space for the rejuvenation of wine's mythical qualities of healing and unification, making the substance an active element in the conversion of America. In this early period, both authors find a certain amount of hope, in the face of a perceived American geographical and human hostility, in the presence of grapevines. It is interesting to note that the presence of wine in France is, according to the most widely-accepted theory, the product of earlier colonization: "... the *vitis vinifera* arrived with Greek and then Roman colonization as a mark of the new civilization."⁷⁷ From here, France appropriated the work of the vine as a national attribute. Our texts recount two French attempts to renew the original move of their Greek and Roman invaders. Wine—the affirmation of a perceived superior culture—and identity go hand in hand in early French colonial endeavors.

⁷³ Thomas Harriot, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588), Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1600), ed. Ernest Rhys (7 vols, London, 1907), vol. 6, p. 170.

⁷⁴ Las Casas, *History of the Indies*, p. 7.

⁷⁵ "Lettre du P. BIARD, au R.P. CHRISTOPHE BALTAZAR, Provincial de France à Paris," in Thwaites, vol. 3, pp. 162–3.

⁷⁶ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 5, pp. 100–101.

⁷⁷ Durand, 797. (my translation) See also Tom Standage, *A History of the World in Six Glasses* (New York, 2005).

Chapter 2

Translating the New World

For when men cannot communicate their thoughts to each other,
simply because of difference of language, all the similarity of their
common human nature is of no avail to unite them in fellowship.
So true is this that a man would be more cheerful with his dog
for company than with a foreigner.

—Saint Augustine, *The City of God*

The early colonizers Champlain and Lescarbot were forced to assimilate Canadian geography in order to conceptualize an American France. For missionaries, such as the Recollects and the Jesuits examined below, the initial confrontation between desire and fact was that of language. Missionaries travelled to America with the Christian ideal that the message of God and “civilization” could be conveyed relatively easily in any tongue; experience proved otherwise.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, in the constitution of the Society of Jesus, stated that members of the Order must “... exercise themselves in preaching and in delivering sacred lectures in a manner suitable for the edification of the people ...,” which meant “... endeavoring to learn the vernacular language ...” in the land of any given mission.¹ In a general Christian context, this was not thought to be difficult, for if one agreed that there existed before Babel a unified human language, then, as one scholar has noted “... at the deepest level, cultural difference cannot prevent God’s word from being heard.”² In 1646, the Jesuit Paul Ragueneau echoes the general missionary optimism concerning native languages:

Il est vray que leur façon de s’énoncer est différente de la nostre. Mais comme la parole du Coeur est la mesme dans tous les hommes, on ne peut pas douter que leur langue n’ait aussi ses beautez et ses graces autant que la nostre.

¹ Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, trans. George E. Ganss (St. Louis, 1970), p. 201. Immersion in native languages was the preferred method of spreading God’s word, by Jesuits and non-Jesuits alike. Biard advocates immersion in 1616, the Recollects practiced it in New France in 1615, and Joseph de Acosta already discusses its merits in his *De Promulgando Evangelio apud Barbaros* at the end of the sixteenth century, but published later in French (Lyon, Laurent Anisson, 1670). See Pierre Berthiaume, “Babel, l’Amérique et les Jésuites,” in Frank Lestringant (ed.), *La France-Amérique, XVIe–XVIIIe siècles: actes du XXXVe Colloque international d’études humanistes* (Paris, 1998), pp. 341–54. A very useful recent article which has helped further my thinking is Micah True, “‘Il faut parler pour estre entendu’: Talking about God in Wendat in 17th century New France,” *Cahiers du dix-septième* 12.1 (2008): 17–35.

² Peter A Dorsey, “Going to School With Savages: Authorship and Authority Among the Jesuits of New France,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55.3 (1998): 412.

[It is true that their way of expressing themselves is different than ours. But, since the word of the Heart is the same in all men, one can not doubt that their language has its beauties and graces to the same degree as ours.]³

Ragueneau is writing nearly thirty years after the arrival of the first missionaries to New France; what appeared to early evangelists as possible, must by this time have seemed quite naïve.⁴ The history of early French linguistic conversion is one of the clash between the desire for a universal language of conversion, and the resistance encountered by that ideal.

In general, the French are perceived as having had, primarily through language, a closer and more intimate relationship with the natives than the Spanish or the English.⁵ Certainly, the historian Francis Parkman's famous generalization that "Spanish civilization crushed the Indian; English civilization scorned and neglected him; French civilization embraced and cherished him" is no longer validated.⁶ In the years since Parkman's remark, commentators have added much-needed nuance to its general and ultimately fallacious nature. There remains a sentiment among commentators, however, that the French linguistic relationship to the Amerindians was one of cultural sensitivity.⁷ It is true that the French, especially the Jesuits, were in many ways more attentive to the complexities of native languages than other European nations. When looked at in the context of a conversion process, however, we argue that this linguistic proximity was not a project of linguistic archaeology; instead, it was an attempt to create a New France in which language was not an impediment to religious understanding. If the idealistic "language of God" could not be attained, then it would be created. In fact, sensitivity, understanding, and preservation of those languages were the furthest notions from the minds of the authors we treat below.

³ Campeau, Lucien (ed.), *Monumenta Novae Franciae* (9 vols, Rome, 1967–2003), vol. 6, p. 649.

⁴ Ragueneau's assertion is most certainly propaganda to embellish the vision in the metropolis of Jesuit chances for success in conversion.

⁵ The practical reasons for this are clear: the French, especially the missionaries and traders, appear to have spent more time in close proximity with the Indians. This necessitated an understanding of native languages.

⁶ Cited in Mason Wade, "The French and the Indians," in Howard Peckham and Charles Gibson (eds), *Attitudes of Colonial Powers toward the American Indian* (Salt Lake City, 1969), p. 61.

⁷ See, for example, Wallace Chafe, "The Earliest European Encounters With Iroquoian Languages," in Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny (eds), *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective* (Toronto, 2001), pp. 252–61. Chafe advances that the Jesuit Jean de Brébeuf's study allowed him at least a partial vision of the "intricacies of their language and culture."

The Early French Linguists

From the earliest moments of interaction with Amerindians, Europeans produced dictionaries of native languages to assist future travellers and missionaries in their dealings with natives. The first significant French example of these translation projects is that included by Jacques Cartier in his 1534 and 1535–36 *Voyages*. The first of the “Cartier vocabularies,” as the texts are known, is a limited glossary of what we now know to be the Northern Iroquoian branch of the Iroquoian language group. The second, according to modern linguists, contains words from other places, but largely pertains to the same tribes, or to the larger “Laurentian” family of languages.⁸ From here, the most serious linguistic explorations came from the Recollects, and especially from Gabriel Sagard in his *Dictionnaire de la Langue Huronne*, published as an appendix to his *Grand Voyage du pays des Hurons* in 1632. Finally, the most assiduous French linguists of the seventeenth century were the Jesuits, notably Jean de Brébeuf. Here we will examine linguistic encounters, especially those of Sagard and the Jesuits, with the Huron tongue. As noted above, while modern historians and critics can see these as helpful archaeological documents, the spirit in which they were compiled is one of erasure and replacement.

The native linguistic group most studied by the French was the language of the Hurons, whose native name was Wyandat. This group, of the Iroquoian family, had close dealings with the French from the early days of contact. Although they shared linguistic and social customs with the Iroquois, the Wyandat were often at odds with their Iroquoian rivals, and would eventually be destroyed by them. The Wyandat (*Huron* is derived from the French word *hure*—head of a wild boar—referring to the hairstyle of the tribes in this group) were the major trading partners of the French, acting as an intermediary between the interior hunting tribes and the Europeans.⁹

In 1615, Samuel de Champlain arranged for four members of the Recollects, a branch of the Franciscan order, to come to Quebec. Upon their arrival, one of them, Father Joseph Le Caron, left for the Huron country. It is likely that only one person, the layman Etienne Brûlé in 1610, had lived among the Huron before Le Caron. Le Caron attempted to record the Huron tongue for future missionaries, but no trace seems to have survived of the nascent dictionary he is said to have

⁸ See Chafe, pp. 252–61. Also see Floyd G Lounsbury, “Iroquois-Cherokee Linguistic Relations,” in William Fenton and John Gulick (eds), *Symposium on Cherokee and Iroquois Culture* (Washington, D.C., 1961), pp. 11–17; and Marianne Mithun, “The Mystery of the Vanished Laurentides,” in Anders Ahlqvist (ed.), *Papers from the 5th International Conference on Historical Linguistics* 4:1 (1982): 230–42.

⁹ See entries from *The Encyclopedia of the North American Indian* (New York, 1997), p. 415. Also see the excellent introduction by Réal Ouellet and Jack Warwick in their edition of Sagard’s *Sagard’s Grand Voyage* (Sillery, 1990). The origin of the word *huron* is confirmed by Father Le Jeune in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (73 vols., Cleveland, 1896–1901), vol. 16, pp. 228–31.

compiled.¹⁰ Gabriel Sagard, a member of the Recollects, must have examined Le Caron's dictionary before travelling to Huron country in 1623.¹¹ He remained there less than a year, but the writings of his stay, through their detail and variety, are consulted as one of the most important sources of information concerning French attitudes to America in the early century. His major works, the *Grand Voyage du pays des Hurons, situé en l'Amérique vers la mer douce, és derniers confins de la nouvelle France* (1632) and the *Histoire du Canada*, were both published in defense of the Recollect position in Canada against Jesuit dominance. Linguistically, he is fascinating for having compiled a *Dictionnaire de la langue Huronne*, included as an appendix to the *Grand Voyage*. This work is one of the most detailed and certainly the most accessible accounts of what is known as "old Huron," that is to say the language as it was spoken before the dispersal of the Hurons by the Iroquois in 1650. It is this text that we will examine here.

Following Sagard's early efforts, and because as the dominant missionary group in New France, their attention to language was unparalleled, we will look at several Jesuit examples. In 1625, the Recollects needed help and were joined by the more affluent and influential Jesuits. Within a few years, the Society of Jesus would succeed in having the Recollects banned from the colony. The history of this Recollect-Jesuit competition is discussed at length in Chapter 4. Jesuit training in languages, the above-mentioned commitment to and experience of missionary work, and their knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew led them to be some of the most advanced linguists of New France.¹² The earliest and most significant among these was Jean de Brébeuf. Brébeuf's 1636 *Relation* contains numerous reflections on language, which will be the basis for much of our discussion of Jesuit work in these initial years.¹³

Translating the *Sauvage*

Our major focus in this chapter will be on the notions of conversion and translation. Indeed, conversion was the primary desire of these travellers. Conversion moves, as we will see, through language as well as customs. Sagard notes that the paramount wish of the "conversion des Sauvages" [conversion of the savages] will only be accomplished "... par l'assistance de quelques colonnes de bons et vertueux

¹⁰ See Chrestien Le Clercq, *First Establishment of the Faith in New France* (1691), trans. John G. Shea (2 vols. New York, 1881), vol. 1, p. 249. Brûlé is discussed below.

¹¹ There is even some evidence—Sagard probably could not have accumulated such a wide knowledge of the language in such a short stay—that the two collaborated. See Gabriel Sagard, *Sagard's Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons/Le Grand voyage au pays des Hurons* (1632), trans. and ed. George M. Wrong (Toronto, 1939), p. xlvii.

¹² See Victor E. Hanzeli, *Missionary Linguistics in New France: A Study of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Descriptions of American Indian Language* (The Hague, 1969).

¹³ We focus on these early years, because, as we noted in our introduction, these were moments of competing visions, whereas following Sagard's and Brébeuf's texts, the Jesuits essentially had a monopoly on writings about conversion.

Chrestiens, avec la doctrine et l'exemple de des bons Religieux" [... through the aid of some settlements of good and virtuous Christians, and together with the teaching and example of good monks].¹⁴ Once the Christian desire for universal comprehension cited above was tested, language was recognized as one of the principal obstacles to the goal of conversion. Lescarbot speaks of the fact that it would be nearly impossible to translate "... seulement l'Oraison Dominicale en leur langue" [... even the Lord's Prayer into their language].¹⁵ Sagard paraphrases Lescarbot when he notes that it is onerous to relate "mesme le *Pater noster*" [even the *Pater Noster*] in the native languages.¹⁶ Translation of Christian ideals into native tongues, for Lescarbot and for others, is nonetheless "... le chemin le plus court pour parvenir à leur conversion" [... the shortest path to their conversion].¹⁷

Cultural Translation

If we place our understanding of the notion of translation in an early-modern context, however, the project underlying these documents becomes clearer. A common word for translation in the seventeenth century, *translator*, is defined in Jean Nicot's *Trésor de la Langue Française* (1606) with two principal meanings. First, it is used in the traditional sense: "Traduier *quelques auteurs Grecs, ou tourner en autre langue*, Graecos authores transferre, voyez Tourner, et Traduire" [Translate some Greek authors, or turn in another language ... see Tourner, and Traduire]. The second definition adds an important conceptual dimension, however: "*Translaté, translatus*, Cic.Estre translaté d'une cité en une autre, et perdre le droict de la premiere, Mutari ciuitate" [Translate, *translatus*. To be translated from one city to another, lose the rights of the first].¹⁸ As a careful examination of some of these linguistic texts reveals, the Hurons, once their language is "translated from one city to another," will effectively "lose the rights of the first."

To clarify, let us consider a relevant general metaphor for French treatments of native languages and conversion, which comes neither from a French missionary nor from words attributed to a native. The Jesuit Superior Paul Le Jeune, in 1632, describes a young former British slave of African origin who has come into the

¹⁴ Sagard, *Sagard's Long Journey*, pp. 53, 301. References refer to both French and English.

¹⁵ Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France/Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, trans. and ed. H.P. Biggar and W.L. Grant (3 vols, Toronto, 1907), vol. 2, p. 476, 180. Citations refer first to French, then to English translation.

¹⁶ Sagard, *Sagard's Long Journey*, pp. 73, 310.

¹⁷ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 2, pp. 478, 180.

¹⁸ Several words were common for "translate" in the early seventeenth century. Nicot's *Trésor de la Langue Française* (1606) provides at least three. First comes *traduire*, for which Nicot gives the following summary definition: "il vient de *Traducere*" [comes from *Traducere*]. Second, we see *tourner* [to turn], a term with many meanings, one of which is given by the example "tourner de Grec en Latin" [to turn from Greek to Latin]. By far the most detailed entry, however, is for the word *translator*. Definitions taken from the ARTFL database. (my translation)

missionaries' care. The boy is in a linguistically difficult position, as he speaks neither French nor the Indian languages. His comprehension of language and conversion, however, is striking. Le Jeune recounts that

... quand on luy parla du baptesme il nous fit rire, sa maistresse luy demandant s'il vouloit estre Chrestien, s'il vouloit estre baptisé, & qu'il seroit comme nous, il dit qu'ouy: mais il demanda si on ne l'escorcherait point en le baptisant.

[When we talked to him about baptism, he made us laugh. His mistress asked him if he wanted to be a Christian, if he wanted to be baptized and be like us, he said "yes"; but he asked if he would not be skinned in being baptized.]

This question, linking appearance and conversion, brings derision from his interlocutors. Le Jeune continues,

Comme il vit qu'on se rioit de sa demande, il repartit en son patois, comme il peut. Vous dites que par le baptesme je seray comme vous, je suis noir & vous estes blancs, il faudra donc m'oster la peau pour devenir comme vous.

[As he saw that they laughed at his questions, he replied in his patois, as best he could: "you say that by baptism I shall be like you. I am black and you are white, I must have my skin taken off then to be like you."]

The Jesuit reaction to this is further mockery: "... la dessus on se mit encore plus à rire" [Thereupon all began to laugh more than ever].¹⁹ The young slave in this text has understood the politics of conversion, perhaps to a greater degree than the Jesuits. To convert is to have one's identity taken away and replaced with another. The first step in this process is the learning, and transformation, of native languages, for, as the Recollect Gabriel Sagard notes, "... je sçay combien vaut la peine d'avoir affaire à un peuple & ne l'entendre point" [I know how onerous it can be to frequent a people without understanding them].²⁰ Cornelius Jaenen reminds us of the utilitarian aspect of learning the languages when he writes that

... since few of the Amerindians learned French, and in the native villages and encampments both fur traders and missionaries used the native languages, it was necessary for all who had any sustained contact with the natives to learn their languages.²¹

¹⁹ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 5, pp. 62–3. Derision could also move in the opposite direction, however, for Father Brébeuf recounts in Thwaites, vol. 10, pp. 90–91 that learning native languages leaves the missionaries at the mercy of "Des femmes, des petits enfans, de tous le sauvages, et d'estre exposé à leur risée" [... women, little children, and all the savages, and exposed to their laughter].

²⁰ Gabriel Sagard, *Dictionnaire [sic] de la langue huronne* (Paris, 1632), p. 2. The text is published without page numbers. For dictionary entries, the text is ordered alphabetically. For other citations, I include page numbers by counting from the beginning as page 1. (my translation)

²¹ Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York, 1976), p. 53.

The notion of translating the other is present in both French examples we have chosen, the Recollect and the Jesuit. The French closeness to language, we argue, is a step in the eventual replacement of that language and the civilization it conveys.

Poverty of Language and Poverty of Spirit

This need for linguistic change is directly linked to the conversion process. The native tongues are poor. Marc Lescarbot remarks that "... ilz n'ont point de mots qui puissent représenter les mysteres de notre Religion" [... they have no words capable of representing the mysteries of our religion], giving the following examples, "... les mots de gloire, vertu, raison, beatitude, Trinité, Saint Esprit, Anges, Archanges, Resurrection, Paradis, Enfer, Eglise, Baptême, Foy, Esperance, Charité, & autres infinis ne sont pas en usage chez eux" [The words *glory, reason, virtue, beatitude, Trinity, Holy Spirit, angels, archangels, resurrection, paradise, hell, Church, baptism, faith, hope, charity* and an infinity of others are not in use among them].²²

Jean de Brébeuf notes, "... nous nous trouvons empeschez de leur faire dire proprement en leur Langue, *Au nom du Pere, & du Fils, & du saint Esprit*" [... we find ourselves hindered from getting them to say properly in their language *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost*].²³ Sagard, in his *Grand voyage du pays des Hurons* (1632), advances that, "... leur langue [est] assez pauvre et disetteuse de mots en plusieurs choses, et particulièrement en ce qui est des mystères de notre sainte religion, lesquels nous ne leur pouvions expliquer, ni même le *pater noster*" [For their language is very poor and defective in words for many things, and particularly so as concerns the mysteries of our holy religions, which we could not explain to them, not even the *Pater noster*].²⁴ Language, then, was an obstacle to the paramount goal of "... la conversion des peuples de delà" [to civilize the people, and make them Christians].²⁵

Several solutions to this problem were proposed, all of which stemmed from the broad French interest in language. The Jesuits attempted in general to translate,

²² Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 2, pp. 476, 180.

²³ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 10, pp. 118–9. The Jesuit Jean de Brébeuf (1593–1649) spent fifteen years among the Hurons, and was one of early New France's most gifted linguists. He is co-author of the 1635 and 1636 *Relations*. See *Dictionary of Canadian Biography I: 1000–1700*, ed. George W. Brown (Toronto, 1966), pp. 121–5.

²⁴ Sagard, *Sagard's Long Journey*, pp. 310, 73. Sagard continues this section by plagiarizing word for word the aforementioned citation from Lescarbot.

²⁵ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 215, 10. Interestingly, Diderot would mock such notions in his "Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville," when he discusses a Tahitian in France having difficulty with language: "Because the Tahitian alphabet contains no *c, d, f, g, q, x, y* or *z*, our language confronted his inflexible speech organs with too many strange articulations and new sounds, and he could never learn to speak it." In Diderot, *Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1992).

despite the difficulties of the project, religious notions into native languages.²⁶ An example comes in Brébeuf's 1636 *Relation*, in which is printed a copy of a sermon in Huron that was pronounced to the natives. Each line of Huron carries a French translation in the text, which gives the following,

Sus escoutez vous qui avez fait la terre, & vous qui Pere vous appelez, & vous son Fils qui vous appellez, & vous Esprit Saint qui vous appelez, sus escoutez car ce n'est pas chose de peu d'importance que nous faisons.

[Come listen you who have made the earth, and you who Father call yourself, and you his Son who call yourself, and you Spirit Holy who call yourself; come listen, for it is not a thing of small importance that we do.]²⁷

The Jesuits, then, are using the native languages to communicate, for better or for worse, the *mystères* of the Catholic faith. By doing so, however, and rendering in Huron what did not exist there before, there is a push to transform the language into a native version of a European tongue. Gabriel Sagard undertakes a similar project in the preface to his *Dictionnaire de la langue huronne*. He presents his dictionary as a tool "... pour la commodité & utilité de ceux qui ont à voyager dans le pais, & n'ont l'intelligence de ladite langue" [... for the commodity and utility of those who need to travel in this country, and do not know the language].²⁸ The project of the dictionary, however, which translates phrases from French to Huron, is more complex than it appears, for Sagard states his mission as being "... bannissant de leur coeur tout ce qui est de vicieux" [... to banish from their hearts all that is vicious].²⁹ Thus, the translation project is one of permanent change. In fact, both the Jesuits and the Recollects wished to transform native languages into a reflection of an idealized Christian parlance.

Breakdown in the System and Divergences Between Missionary Groups

It is important to note in relation to all French linguistic projects, that there was both a recognition and a denial of failure in the attempts to transfer religious notions through language. Thus, the process was not as facile as the missionaries had hoped. In *The Middle Ground*, Richard White discusses the problematic nature of a belief in "true communication" which would eventually allow a sort of unhindered comprehension to occur. White notes that while many of the missionaries hoped to convert the notion of God to native tongues, perhaps the word assigned the notion was simply applied to an already-existing native idea of "manitou," which meant, roughly "... an other-than-human person, a spiritual being capable of

²⁶ The Jesuits were eager, as were other missionaries, to avoid the need for outside translators, or *truchements*. See below, p. 59.

²⁷ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 10, pp. 69–73.

²⁸ Sagard, *Dictionnaire*, p. 5. (my translation)

²⁹ Sagard, *Dictionnaire*, p. 12. (my translation)

taking manifold physical forms.”³⁰ As White states in relation to the Algonquians in the middle of the century, although his assertion is also applicable to earlier attempts at conversion, “... in time the Jesuits would profoundly alter the way some Algonquians viewed the world, but for very many others these priests and their gods could fit easily into the existing religion.”³¹ That is to say that possibly, categories of supernatural belief were not as drastically altered as the missionaries hoped through linguistic transformation, and the natives were often quite aware of what was being attempted, even treating the missionaries with mockery. The Jesuits sometimes found that they had been taught obscenities by native tutors when they believed that they were uttering beautiful phrases of Scripture in native tongues. A telling example comes from Pierre Biard. It is interesting here that Biard is discussing a rival missionary group. His treatment of linguistic breakdown, then, is both an admission of a possible fault in the system, and a denial of that fault’s occurrence within his own order. He notes that although his predecessors, within the Poutrincourt/De Monts expeditions to Port Royal boast of many conversions, in fact they have made little progress,

... car ces tost Baptisez venoyent bien à l’Eglise, mais ils y marmotoyent leur anciennes idolatries. Ils homoyent les festes commandées; mais en faisant leurs anciens sacrifices, danses, & superstitions, ils alloient à la sainte Communion, si l’on vouloit, mais c’estoit sans sçavoir ny *Credo*, ny *Confiteo*. Et au sortir de là, s’en alloient enyvrrer, & chanter au Diable leurs sorceries accoustumées.

[... for these who were too soon baptized willingly came to church but it was to mutter their ancient idolatries. They observed the appointed saints’ days, but it was while carrying on their ancient sacrifices, dances, and superstitions; they went to holy communion, if it was desired, but without knowing either the *Creed* or *Confession*, and emerging from there, they went off to get drunk and to sing to the Devil their usual sorceries.]³²

If the project is fruitless, it is simply because its artisans are taking an incorrect path. Thus, in the various French projects there is indeed a recognition of difficulty, while often a denial of the eventual implications of these difficulties on the final success of conversion.³³

Beyond general French practices, how did internal differences affect the relationship to language? The methods of the Recollects and those of the Jesuits

³⁰ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, England, 1991), p. 25.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27. See pp. 25–7 for a clear discussion of this issue as a whole in relation to the Algonquians. Even though White limits his discussion to one group, the notions treated here are useful in relation to general French/Amerindian contact.

³² Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 4, pp. 144–5.

³³ On these difficulties, some of them quite humorous, see Margaret J. Leahey, “‘Comment peut un muet prescher l’évangile?’ Jesuit Missionaries and the Native Languages of New France,” *French Historical Studies* 19.1 (1995): 105–32.

differ, and their visions of what the end of this linguistic conversion should be is crucial in relation to visions of a New France.³⁴ The Recollect conception demonstrates a clear attempt to transplant France linguistically, and the Jesuit model in fact posits a New France with more Roman attachments. Thus, the sensitivity noticed by many commentators is a concern not with the natives but with the self. Whether in the Recollect example of a language conveying civilization, or a Jesuit one referring back to Latin categories, the linguistic vision of each group reflects their ultimate notion of what it is to establish a New France, and what version of that France is to be established. As we will see, for the Recollect it is one of culture, and for the Jesuits one of a unified, Roman church. Essentially, both groups agree that the path to a New France passed through language; they diverged, however, on the final form that linguistic *Nouvelle-France* would take.

Sagard's Dictionnaire

We will begin with Sagard, for whom language is closely linked to a collective identity. Most discussions of the French relationship to native languages work with the Jesuit model. Indeed, there were many French-Amerindian dictionaries compiled by Jesuits throughout the seventeenth century, and the members of the Society of Jesus were recognized linguists. Much of these lexical projects are reproduced as part of the *Jesuit Relations*, but there are also separate texts such as Breton's later *Dictionnaire Caraïbe Français/Français Caraïbe, meslé de quantité de remarques historiques pour l'éclaircissement de la langue* (Paris 1665), which is interesting for its bi-directional structure; another example is the dictionary by Pierre-Joseph-Marie Chaumonot, S.J., in the middle of the century. It is important to note here that the majority of the dictionaries, due to lack of printing in New France, were essentially printed for and used by a metropolitan audience. Therefore, their practical use for the missionaries was limited. Rather, the handwritten notes of their fellows were the texts used by *les hommes de terrain* in New France.³⁵ There are other examples, however, of French dictionaries of native languages which fall out of the Jesuits' control. There are, of course, the practical and summary lexicons often included in the writings of explorers, for example in Cartier or Lescarbot. In relation to conversion, however, the most interesting counter example to Jesuit works is contained in Sagard's *Dictionnaire*.

Sagard's text is based on a solid faith in the civilizing powers of the French language. French, possibly more than other European languages, has a direct and palpable link to collective identity. We should qualify this with a reminder that language was one of many markers of identity. Recent scholarship has deepened our knowledge of early-modern linguistic politics, making it clear that long-held myths of a teleological road to linguistic unity, generally beginning with article

³⁴ For an interesting look at some of these differences, see Martin Fournier, "Paul Lejeune et Gabriel Sagard: Deux visions du monde et des Amérindiens," *Canadian folklore* 17.1 (1995): 85–101.

³⁵ See Edward Gray, *New World Babel* (Princeton, 1999), p. 33.

111 of Francis I's Ordinance of Villers Cotterêt in 1539, are reductive. Indeed, when the king ordered that all legal documents in the kingdom be "... written in the French mother tongue and no other," it is now generally thought that this included all local vernaculars.³⁶ Nonetheless, the sixteenth century, most famously in Du Bellay's *Défense et illustration de la langue française* (1549)—"... c'est en effet la Défense et Illustration de notre langue française, à l'entreprise de laquelle rien ne m'a induit, que l'affection naturelle envers ma patrie" [... this is precisely the Defense and Illustration of our French language, the undertaking of which nothing has led me, except the natural affection that I hold for my country]—and the seventeenth century, with the solidification of the idea that a clear bond existed between a linguistic *génie* and a national one were key moments in the development of connection between language and identity in France.³⁷ The reflection on language in the New World has rarely been inserted into larger metropolitan debates on linguistic matters.³⁸

It seems clear from a reading of Sagard's dictionary that such colonial reflections have their place in this formative debate on identity. It is in Sagard's text that this link is most evident. In his attempted linguistic conversion, New France will merit this name once the native languages resemble French. In the introduction to the most recent edition of Sagard's *Grand Voyage*, Réal Ouellet and Jack Warwick draw a parallel between Sagard and the French linguistic writer of the seventeenth century, François de la Mothe le Vayer.³⁹ We will examine the

³⁶ Cited in *Renaissance and Reformation France: 1500–1648*, ed. Mack P. Holt (Oxford, 2002), p. 11. Also see Paul Cohen, "Linguistic Politics on the Periphery: Louis XIII, Béarn, and the Marking of French as an Official Language in Early Modern France," in Brian D. Joseph, Johanna Destafano, Neil G. Jacobs, and Ilse Lehisté (eds), *When Languages Collide: Perspectives on Language Conflict, Language Competition, and Language Coexistence* (Columbus, 2003), pp. 43–68.

³⁷ Joachim Du Bellay, *La deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*, ed. Jean-Charles Monferran (Geneva, 2001), p. xvi. The early seventeenth century is a crucial moment of linguistic study in relation to a vision of national character, with, for example, the works of Malherbe, and more systematically Vaugelas, Guez de Balzac and La Mothe le Vayer. This moment begins roughly in 1594 with Du Vair's *De l'Eloquence française* and continues to 1647 with Vaugelas's *Remarques*.

³⁸ New work is moving in this direction, especially in relation to later years of contact, when royal involvement led to a reinforcement of French as the official language. See Saliha Belmessous, "Être français en Nouvelle-France: Identité française et identité coloniale aux dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles," *French Historical Studies* (Summer, 2004): 507–40.

³⁹ The authors ask, "Entre Sagard et Le Vayer, y a-t-il coincidence ou influence?" [Between Sagard and LaVayer, is it a question of coincidence or influence?]. They are discussing le Vayer's visions of the natives in his *De la vertu des païens*, but if Sagard had knowledge of this side of the author, perhaps he had also been exposed to the ideas which would later be compiled in *Les considérations sur l'éloquence française de ce temps* (1638).

parallels between early seventeenth-century linguistic thought, especially in le Vayer, and the *Dictionnaire*.

The language Sagard presents in this text reflects the state of dangerous moral and spiritual poverty of the Huron people. If this language is insufficient, how can we convey the message of God to the natives? Indeed, this is one of the most persistent perceived obstacles to conversion. Biard notes this problematic; native languages can describe the material world through such objects and actions as

... une pierre, une riviere, une maison; frapper, sauter, rire, s'asseoir. Mais aux actions interieures, & spirituelles, qui ne peuvent se demonstrier aux sens, & aux mots, qu'on appelle abstracts, & universels; comme croire, douter, esperer, discourir, apprehender, un animal, un corps, une substance, un esprit, vertu, vice, peché, raison, justice, & c. En cela il falloit ahanner, & suer, là estoient les tranchées de leur enfantement.

[... a stone, a river, a house, to strike, to jump, to laugh, to sit down. But when it came to internal and spiritual acts, which cannot be demonstrated to the senses, and in regard to words which are called abstract and universal, such as to believe, to doubt, to hope, to discourse, to apprehend, an animal, a body, a substance, a spirit, virtue, vice, sin, reason, justice, etc.,-for these things they had to labor and sweat; in these were the pains of travail.]⁴⁰

Although Sagard is generally seen as one of the most sensitive and faithful observers of the Hurons, his vision is akin to Biard's.⁴¹ For Sagard, Huron linguistic savagery finds its savior in the French language, making the *Dictionnaire de la Langue Huronne* an essential contribution to the French civilizing mission and to linguistic notions in the seventeenth century.

First, the Huron tongue conveys their moral shortcomings. The text of the dictionary serves in many ways to emphasize these faults. For example, some of the longest sections of the dictionary, which is organized alphabetically from French to Huron by theme, deal with the harsh realities that the voyager will face. Under "Ar" we find "Ils luy arracherent la barbe" [They ripped off his beard], and in "Ba," we read "Battre" [To Beat] "je te batray" [I will beat you], "Je te batray à bon escient" [I will beat you when necessary], "Ne le bat point, ne me bat point" [Do not beat him, do not beat me], "N. bat sa femme" [N. beats his wife], "Tu bas ta femme" [You beat your wife], "je te deschireray & rompray tout en ta Cabane" [I will tear you up and break everything in your hut]. The entries for "Bl" include "Tu me blesses, tu m'as blessé, tu me blesseras" [You wound me, you wounded me, you will wound me], and "Ne me blesse point" [Do not wound me]. In "De," we read "Desrober" [To steal], as well as "Donne-moy ce que tu as desrobé en

⁴⁰ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 1, pp. 194, 195.

⁴¹ See, for example, Warwick and Ouellet's introduction to the 1990 edition of Sagard's *Grand voyage*. Also see Anne de Vaucher, "Civilisation et langue de l'autre: Le Grand voyage du pays des Hurons de Gabriel Sagard," Enea Balmas (ed.), *La scoperta dell'America e le lettere francesi* (Milan, 1992).

<i>Ba</i>	<i>Ba</i>
Turis, int. <i>Sasquani.</i>	Iete batray.
Il rit. pl. <i>Aesquanni.</i>	<i>Agontayo</i>
N. est vn rieur, iouial.	Iete batray à bon es-
N. <i>Harouyhouenne.</i>	cient.
<i>Ba</i>	<i>Ondera houanhoua.</i>
<i>Barbe.</i>	Ie deschireray & rom-
	pray tout en ta Ca-
	bane.
	<i>Vhanonchientauha.</i>
I'ay de la barbe, 3.per.	Qui t'a battu?
<i>Ascoinrôte, Ocoinronte.</i>	<i>Siné sayot.</i>
Tu as de la barbe.	N. t'a battu.
<i>Sascoinrontein.</i>	N. <i>Esathrio.</i>
Ils ont de la barbe, int.	Ne le bat point, ne me
<i>Otiscoiron.</i>	bat point.
Ie n'ay point de bar-	<i>Ennon égontayo.</i>
be, 3.per.	Il ne faut point battre,
<i>Téoscoinronte.</i>	il ne le faut point
Tu n'as point de bar-	battre.
be.	<i>Stan déchrio.</i>
<i>Baa</i>	Tu l'as battu.
<i>Bailler.</i>	<i>Achatrrio.</i>
	N. a battu M.
	N. <i>athrio M.</i>
Ie baaille, 3.per.	N. m'a battu. N. <i>ario.</i>
<i>Eyonrixha.</i>	Il m'a battu.
<i>Ba</i>	<i>Ario eindi.</i>
<i>Battre.</i>	<i>Aheintette éni yathrio.</i>

Fig. 2.1

Unnumbered page from Gabriel Sagard's *Dictionnaire de la langue huronne* (Paris, 1632). Image used with kind permission of Canadiana.org.

nostre Cabane” [Give me what you stole from our hut]. For “Fa,” the traveler will need to say “Ne te fasche point, ne te mets point en cholere” [Do not get angry, Do not show your anger], and in “Gu,” we find “Guerre, Tue-le, va le tuer” [War, kill him, go kill him]. “Me,” a very rich section, includes “Menteurs” [Liars], “Tu as menty” [You lied], “Il a menty” [He lied], “Meschant” [Mean], “Tu es meschant” [You are mean], “Vous estes tous meschants” [You are all mean]. There are certainly sections containing less violence, but examples like these abound in the dictionary, translating a world in which language is equated with problems of environment and lesser civilization.

Second, the *Dictionaire* demonstrates the spiritual deficiencies of the Huron language, which render it impossible to convey messages of the Gospel. Sagard laments in his *Long Voyage*, borrowing from Lescarbot, that “... les mots de Gloire, Trinité, saint Esprit, Ange, Résurrection, Paradis, Enfer, Église, Foi, Espérance et Charité et autres infinis ne sont pas en usage chez eux” [... the words *Glory, Trinity, Holy Spirit, Angel, Resurrection, Heaven, Hell, Church, Faith, Hope, Charity*, and other infinites are not in use among them].⁴² In the dictionary itself, this problem is represented through absences. In a work ostensibly covering the vocabulary necessary for the missionary, the lack of religious terms is striking. Nowhere in the text, a tool destined to help the future evangelist, does Sagard mention words that will assist this type of work. Interestingly, the sole entries dealing with religious matters treat God’s antithesis. Under “Yo,” for the Huron word *Yoscaga*—for which Sagard does not provide a definition—we find “Le Diable en a peur, a peur de cela” [The Devil is afraid it, is afraid of this], “Le Diable ne craint point les Hurons” [The Devil is not afraid of the Hurons], and “Les François ne craignent point le Diable” [The French do not fear the Devil]. This practical text for missionaries does not equip with Huron words for conversion. Rather, it wishes to convert by proposing a larger project of assimilation that will eventually render the native tongue obsolete.

The way to resolve the problem of the Huron tongue is, essentially, to mould it into a version of French. According to early seventeenth-century conceptions of language, nearly all of the Huron virtues derive from its similarities to French, and its faults are born of its differences to the language of Sagard’s mother country.

An example of a virtue is the specificity of the Huron language. Sagard notes that although the numerous tongues of the New World all have common ancestors, “... pour les Hurons ou Houandates, leur langue est tellement particuliere & differente de toute les autres, qu’elle ne derive d’aucune” [For the Hurons, or Houndatees, their language is so particular and different from all of the others, that it is derived from no other].⁴³ This justifies the study of the language. This quality, however, can be traced to conceptions of French dating back to Jean Lemaire de Belges in his fifteenth-century *La Concorde des deux langues*, in which he notes that, through a complex process of ancestry, French is in fact the original

⁴² Sagard, *Sagard’s Long Journey*, pp. 311, 89.

⁴³ Sagard, *Dictionaire*, p. 4. (my translation)

language, thereby without ancestors.⁴⁴ If seventeenth-century theorists' dreams of Greek and Roman lineage do not allow them to go this far, one major facet of their case for French is its specificity and uniqueness.

From here, Sagard notes the numerous shortcomings of the Huron tongue. François de La Mothe la Vayer, in *Les considérations sur l'éloquence française de ce temps* (1638), notes that clarity is one of the major qualities of a language: "... nous ne parlons et n'écrivons que pour être entendus, d'où vient que la première perfection de l'Oraison consiste en ce point d'être claire et intelligible" [... we speak and write to be understood, from which the first perfection of Oratory is to be clear and intelligible].⁴⁵ In light of such notions, Huron is a highly imperfect tool for Sagard. The difference of accents makes it impossible to understand the language from one area to another,

C'est pourquoy il ne se faudra point estonner si en voyageant dans le pays, on trouve cette difficulté, & qu'une mesme chose se dise un peu differemment ou autrement en un lieu qu'en un autre, dans un mesme village, & encore dans une mesme Cabane.

[This is why one should not be surprised, when travelling in these countries, to find the difficulty of something being said differently from one place to another, or in the same village, or even in the same hut.]⁴⁶

In addition, the language, Sagard notes, is in an earlier state than French. It was a common conception, shared by the major theorists of the day such as Malherbe, Balzac, Vaugelas, and La Mothe, that French had achieved a state of perfection and thus was ready to be completely codified. French was ready to express "la perfection du raisonnement" [perfection in reasoning].⁴⁷ Sagard notes the clear opposition between such an advanced language and the one spoken by the Hurons. He anticipates criticisms that would decry his lack of general grammatical rules for the Huron tongue. The fault, he says, must be placed on the primitive nature of the language. For Sagard, "... il n'y a que la pratique & le long usage de la langue qui peut user des regles; qui sont autant confuses & mal-aisees à cognoistre, comme la langue est imparfaicte" [... only extended practice and usage of the language which can allow one to know the rules ; which are so confused and difficult to learn, such is their language imperfect]. He continues, noting that "Nos Hurons, & generalmente toutes les autres Nations [du Canada], ont la mesme instabilité de langage" [Our Hurons, and generally all other nations (of Canada), have the same linguistic instability]. He remarks that "... il est question d'une langue sauvage,

⁴⁴ See Colette Beaune, *Naissance de la Nation France* (Paris, 1993). This is an attempt, in part, to escape the influence of the Greek and Latin languages.

⁴⁵ In Gilbert Guisan (ed.), *Considérations sur l'Eloquence française de ce temps* (Lausanne, 1944), p. 87.

⁴⁶ Sagard, *Dictionnaire*, p. 6. (my translation)

⁴⁷ Quoted in Guisan, *Considérations*, p. 87.

presque sans regle, & tellement imparfaicte” [... we are dealing with a savage language, almost without rules, and extremely imperfect]. Or further: “... tout y est tellement confondu & imparfaict, comme j’ay desia dict, qu’il n’y a que la pratique & le long usage qui y peut perfectionner les negligens & peu studieux” [... all is so confused and imperfect, as I have already said, that only practice and long usage can help the less studious and negligent to learn it]. As French is closely linked to a national *genie* of clarity and is a language that is “... grave & magistrale” [grave and magisterial], the opposition between the French and the Hurons is reinforced through language.⁴⁸ As stated earlier, Sagard’s goal is to banish “... de leur coeur tout ce qui est de vicieux [... from their hearts all that is vicious]. It seems clear though, that beyond eradicating “all that is vicious,” the priority is to erase “tout ce qui n’est pas français” [all that is not French]. In any case, it is certain that the principal method of banishing all that is savage and vice-ridden is to banish linguistically all that is Huron.

The effacement of the “savage” took on many forms in the New World, such as the repression of nomadism and native religious rituals.⁴⁹ We see one of those methods through Sagard’s text. The missionary’s lexicon of the Huron tongue is more than a useful tool, it is a model first of erasure, and then for Frenchification. Once the Hurons begin speaking and reasoning as the French, it will be possible to convert them.

The Jesuits and the Roman Model

Beyond similarities of translation between the two groups, the Jesuit relation to language is based on notions which would result in a New France far different from Sagard’s. The Jesuits’ loyalties in relation to France, and any other entity than the pope, have been the source of trouble for the Order. Its originator, St. Ignatius of Loyola, placed especial emphasis on the virtue of obedience to the pope in the charter of the Company of Jesus, founded in 1540. Indeed, the Jesuits were outlawed in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV due to pressure from the governments of France, Spain, and Portugal, all of whom were dissatisfied with the Order’s power and allegiance to the papacy.⁵⁰ Such ambient mistrust was used in attacks on the Jesuits in New France. Pierre Biard, for example, in a quarrel with Jean de Poutrincourt, friend to Lescarbot, ally of the king’s emissary de Monts and one of New France’s earliest advocates, was accused by his enemies of being less than loyal. The Jesuits, according to the legal transcript of the quarrel, trigger “... l’assassinat des Rois, que par leurs livres ils soustiennent” [... the assassination of kings, which they support through their books]. As proof, the author notes that,

⁴⁸ Sagard, *Dictionnaire*, p. 9. (my translation)

⁴⁹ Indeed, the Recollects approached the missionary project, as Edward Gray notes, “... with the intent not simply of baptizing native peoples or cleansing them of their pagan beliefs but rather of completely reforming their way of life.” Gray, *New World Babel*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ See Thwaites’s introduction to the *Relations*, as well as Louis Chatellier, *Le Catholicisme en France* (3 vols., Paris, 1995), vols. 1 and 2.

“... en presence de vingt personnes Biard a dict choses equipolentes, & demandé si c'estoient paroles atroces, que d'avoir dict, que l'assassinat du Roy Henry le Grand estoit un coup du Ciel” [... in the presence of twenty people, Biard said such things, and asked if it was atrocious to say that the assassination of Henry the Great was a Godsend].⁵¹ In short, it was suspected that “... tout leur but est l'accroissement de l'estranger, & l'affoiblissement de l'Estat François” [... their entire goal is the raising of the foreigner, and the weakening of the French State].⁵² It is clear that it is irrelevant whether or not such accusations were justified, but the divided loyalties of the Jesuits would eventually lead to the end of the publication of the *Relations*, when the missionaries could not decide whether to defer to Rome or to the king in matters of editorial policy. The Jesuits, in relation to the concept of a New France, are thus fascinating. They are both powerful in France and suspect.⁵³ They are at the same moment French and outside the common notions of what this meant.

The distinction between France and Rome, always present in discussions surrounding French Jesuits, extends to linguistic policies in the New World. Saint Ignatius of Loyola states that

The order to be observed in the subjects [taught in Jesuit colleges] is that a solid foundation should be laid in the Latin language before the liberal arts, in the liberal arts before scholastic theology, and in scholastic theology before positive theology.⁵⁴

It is this primacy of Latin that is problematic and remarkable in relation to a New France. While it is clear that there were no better and more sensitive linguists in New France than the Jesuits—one has only to read Brébeuf or Le Jeune to be convinced of this—the desired result of the linguistic and cultural translation noted earlier is different from that of Sagard. While the Recollect refers directly to a French model, the Jesuits of New France “... had, from the very beginning of their education, been immersed in Latin, having been forced to speak it at Jesuit colleges and teach it at Jesuit grammar schools.” The consequence of this is that “Jesuit missionaries tended to privilege lexical over grammatical meaning,” so that they assumed that changes in meaning, as with Latin, resulted from inflection.⁵⁵ Brébeuf notes that in Huron, “La variété [des] noms composez est tres-grande, & c'est la clef du secret de leur Langue” [The variety of these compound nouns is

⁵¹ *Factum du procez entre Messire Jean de Biencourt Chevalier sieur de Poutrincourt, Baron de S. Just, appellant d'une part, et Pierre Biard, Evemond Massé & consorts soy disans Prestres de la Société de Jesus, intimez 1613* (Bibliothèque Nationale, 4-FM-2965), p. 44. (my translation)

⁵² *Factum*, p. 44. (my translation)

⁵³ They had, throughout the century, many influential protectors at the highest levels of power.

⁵⁴ Cited in Gray, *New World Babel*, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Gray, *New World Babel*, p. 42. Also see Hanzeli, *Missionary Linguistics*.

very great, and that is the key to the secret of their language].⁵⁶ Once the secret is understood, however, the Huron language might look much like Latin. For example, Brébeuf notes the linguistic practice and progress of his early days among the Hurons, “... il se remarque une double conjugaison, et je croy que ceci est commun aux langues Americaines: l’une est simple & absolue semblable a nos conjugaisons Latines et Françaises” [... there is to be noticed a double conjugation, and I believe that this is common to the American languages. The one is simple and absolute like our Latin and French conjugations].⁵⁷ The emphasis, then, is placed upon linguistic notions stemming directly from Latin. Whether because his order did not provide the training of the Jesuits or, more likely, because his interests are elsewhere, this is not the case for Sagard.⁵⁸ Brébeuf continues, alluding to the missionaries’ ultimate project “... finalement nous-nous occupasmes à reformer, ou plutost à ranger une Grammaire” [Finally we busied ourselves in revising, or rather in arranging, a Grammar].⁵⁹ This grammar of the Huron language, which demonstrates the efforts of the Jesuits “... to codify Indian tongues according to a Latin standard,” is reproduced only partially in this volume of the *Relations*.⁶⁰ In sum, the Jesuit linguistic “mimetic capital,” to use Stephen Greenblatt’s term, is far more Latin than French.⁶¹ Victor E. Hanzeli’s *Missionary Linguistics in New France*, studies ways in which Jesuit attempts to fit native the native languages into Latin-based categories failed, thereby forcing them to innovate. Hanzeli’s early work has led others to evaluate methods by which the Jesuits varied from the model I propose here.⁶² However, no work has been able to deny the primacy of Latin categories in Jesuit conceptions of language.

What current work has added to our understanding of Jesuit notions of language, however, are the ways in which they masked shortcomings, fears, violence, and failures in their work. The importance of rhetoric, reinforcing the recourse to Latin categories and the desire for order, has been examined in depth by Réal Ouellet and Alain Beaulieu, for example. The creation of a typified literary figure of the Jesuit warrior at war with savagery is presented convincingly by Marie-Christine

⁵⁶ Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, vol. 10, pp. 116–7. As we will see below, the British use the key metaphor to very different ends.

⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. 10, pp. 121–2.

⁵⁸ It is well-known that Sagard’s linguistic training was limited.

⁵⁹ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 10, pp. 54–5.

⁶⁰ Gray, *New World Babel*, p. 42.

⁶¹ Greenblatt describes “mimetic capital” as “a stockpile of representations, a set of images and image-making devices that are accumulated ... until such time as these representations are called upon to generate new representations.” In Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago, 1991), p. 6.

⁶² See for example Margaret J. Leahey’s article cited above, note 33.

Pioffet as a process by which the violence of the colonial encounter is raised to the level of the crusade.⁶³

Thus, the French relationship to language constantly tended towards a goal of cultural translation. Though the end results of these projects differ—Sagard viewed New France in clearly French linguistic terms, while the Jesuit vision of language stems from interests within their order—the wrestling with linguistic difficulty forced a revelation of different forms of the self.

The Fear of Transformation

What are some of the lingering fears that lay below the surface of this attempt to “rationalize” and “Frenchify” difference? Two major figures exemplify the haunting difficulties, beyond being unable to convey God’s message, underlying the linguistic divergences between France and the Amerindians: the *truchement* and the *coureur de bois*.

The Truchement

One mythical, important, and often hidden figure in the relationship between Amerindians and Europeans was the translator, or, as Stephen Greenblatt termed it, the “go-between.”⁶⁴ Montaigne, in his “Des Cannibales,” discusses conversations with Brazilian visitors to France, lamenting the deficiencies of his translator in conveying the author’s cultural curiosity: “Je parlay à l’un d’eux fort long temps; mais j’avois un truchement qui me suyvoit si mal et qui estoit si empesché à recevoir mes imaginations par sa bestise, que je n’en peus tirer guiere de plaisir” [I talked with one of them for a long time; but I had a translator who followed me so poorly, and who was so unable to understand my imaginings by his stupidity, that I could garner no pleasure from the encounter].⁶⁵ For missionaries, the problem was beyond simply being unable to trust the intellect of a translator. The go-between was perceived as potentially on the side of the *sauvage*. The necessity to learn the language so thoroughly as to capture the trust of the natives, in the minds of those who relied on *truchements*, certainly meant that the translator had acquired at least some of the undesirable qualities of the non-European. Frank Lestringant, in his treatments of the *truchements normands* in Brazil, discusses the rebellious, dangerous nature of the translator. The non-missionary, often money-driven figure, “... passes to the other side of the mirror ... he is thereafter considered

⁶³ Réal Ouellet and Alain Beaulieu (eds), *Rhétorique et conquête missionnaire: le jésuite Paul Lejeune* (Quebec: Septentrion, 1993). See, especially, the introduction, pp. 9–11, and Marie-Christine Pioffet’s article “L’arc et l’épée: les images de la guerre chez le jésuite Paul Lejeune,” pp. 41–65.

⁶⁴ Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990). See chapter on Cortes’s interpreter Doña Marina. Also see Edward Gray’s chapter on translation in his *New World Babel*.

⁶⁵ Michel de Montaigne, *Essais* (1580) (Paris, 1969), vol. 1, p. 263.

a traitor.”⁶⁶ This treatment, as Lestringant underlines, is due to the fact that the *truchement* brings to light “... the fundamental weakness ...” of the European “... to the seductions of an existence ...” close to nature.⁶⁷

The Coureur de Bois

The emblematic figure in New France of the Frenchman who has “gone to the other side” is the *coureur de bois*. These independent trappers, often extremely proficient in native tongues and more comfortable among the Ameridians than among their original compatriots, were perceived as a threat to civilization. As late as 1679, the *Intendant* Duchesneau wrote to his superiors in France concerning the progress of the seigniorial system in New France, lamenting that “... je continuerai avec regret de vous faire connoistre les dommages qui y sont causés par la rébellion des coureurs de bois, aux ordonnances de Sa Majesté” [... I will continue with regret to inform you of the damages cause by the rebellion of the *coureurs de bois*, to the ordinances of His Majesty].⁶⁸ More threatening to a sense of order, however, was the sentiment on the part of missionaries that the *coureurs de bois* “... menaient une vie licensieuse au milieu des tribus sauvages” [... lived licentious lives among the savages].⁶⁹ The most famous of these figures was Étienne Brûlé, a member of Champlain’s early expeditions, who, despite having been one of the most gifted linguists of the early colony, and perhaps even collaborating on Sagard’s *Dictionnaire*, is remembered by his contemporaries for the suspicion he elicited through his perceived personal failings.⁷⁰ Champlain, railing Brûlé for having betrayed the king in the French conflicts with the British, attacks he and his fellow *coureurs* directly for their immoral lives: “... vous demeurez sans religion, mangeant chair Vendredy & Samedy, vous licentiant en des desbauches & libertinages desordonnées, souuenez-vous que Dieu vous punira si vous ne vous amendez” [... you remain without religion, eating meat on Friday and Saturday, and indulging yourselves in unrestrained debauchery and libertinism. Remember that God will punish you if you do not mend your ways].⁷¹ The fundamental suspicion is, as with the *truchement*, that living too closely with the *sauvages*, without religious or royal approbation, leads to the breakdown of Frenchness. Religiously sanctioned linguistic conversion, then, is not only a way to save Amerindian souls; it is a way to protect oneself from becoming the Other.

⁶⁶ Frank Lestringant, *L’Expérience huguenote au nouveau monde (XVI^e siècle)* (Geneva, 1996), p. 180. (my translation)

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 180–81. (my translation)

⁶⁸ *Documents relating to the seigniorial tenure in Canada, 1598–1854*, ed. William B. Munro (Toronto, 1908).

⁶⁹ Narcisse Eutrope Dionne, *Samuel Champlain fondateur de Québec et père de la Nouvelle-France, histoire de sa vie et de ses voyages* (Quebec, 1906), p. 51.

⁷⁰ Brûlé is also most likely the first European to have penetrated into Huronia.

⁷¹ Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain/Œuvres* (6 vols, Toronto, 1922–35). vol. 6, p. 99.

British North America and Language

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the perceived closer relationship between the French and natives through language. Was the general relationship to language different from, for example, the colonial neighbors to the south, the British? It is certain that the British colonists differed from the French in their treatments of language; the relatively few seventeenth-century dictionaries and grammars of Indian languages in English attest to this. Indeed, there are only three texts dedicated entirely to the native languages between the years 1643 and 1798. However, the British did show an interest in the native tongues. In these few works, we can see fascinating differences between the two colonial approaches to language, many of which are linked to divergent views on conversion. Through a discussion of both the general notions and particular differences in three key British treatments of language in America, the French view can be better contextualized. We will examine Thomas Harriot's treatment of Algonkian in his *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588), Roger Williams's *A Key Into the Language of America or An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America called New-England* (1643), and John Eliot's *The Indian Grammar Begun: or, an essay to Bring the Indian Language Into Rules* (1666).⁷²

On a general level, each of the British texts has in common the attachment to the practical aspects of language learning, much like the French. However, their relationship to conversion, and especially mercantile practices—absent from the French texts—differs greatly from the missionaries of New France.⁷³ The British generally discuss what they could *gain* from learning the native languages, in contrast to the French, who in general focus on *giving* a certain version of civilization.

First, the British authors we discuss, representative of a general sentiment, did not find it problematic to join conversion and commercialism. Roger Williams, in his *A Key Into the Language of America*, advances the wish to allow the English to converse with the natives, "... and by such converse it may please the Father of Mercies to spread divine (and in his own most holy season) Christianitie; for one candle will light ten thousand." He continues,

⁷² I would like to thank Mathieu Lauzon for these references, and for his helpful suggestions concerning the British relationship to language. Although the Harriot work is not dedicated exclusively to language, the author is recognized, in Vivian Salmon's words, as "... the Englishman responsible for the first sustained attempt to record an Algonkian language, and to teach English to native North American Indian speakers ...," in Vivian Salmon, *Language and Society in Early Modern England: Selected essays 1981–1994*, ed. Konrad Koerner (Amsterdam, Philadelphia, 1996), p. 143.

⁷³ The French and British relationships to commerce will be discussed at length in Chapter 4.

I resolved (by the assistance of the most High) to cast those Materialls into this Key, pleasant and profitable for All, but specially for my friends residing in those parts:

A little key may open a Box, where lies a bunch of Keyes.⁷⁴

Thus, Williams proposes a project of conversion in light of the profit a nation could gain from such actions, in the comparison between America and a box of plenitude.

Thomas Harriot, in his *Briefe and True Report*, begins with a list of “Merchantable commodities” which can “... greatly profit our owne countrymen.”⁷⁵ Indeed, Harriot was a member of Walter Raleigh’s 1585 expedition, and his role “was to collect information about the resources of the country which, Raleigh hoped, would prove attractive to potential colonists.”⁷⁶ It is only at the end of the description that Harriot discusses conversion and language: “Many times and in every towne where I came, according as I was able, I made declaration of the contents of the Bible ... and chiefe points of Religion, as I was able then to utter.”⁷⁷ By learning the languages, the English can, like the French, hope to convert the Indians. Harriot notes that “Some religion they have already, which although it be farre from the trueth, yet being as it is, there is hope that it may be the easier and sooner reformed.”⁷⁸ The order is clear for Harriot; first comes commerce, then come language and conversion in the hopes of achieving the dual goal of bringing the natives to religion and bringing riches to England.

John Eliot, in his *Indian Grammar Begun*, would seem to be an exception to the rule. Indeed, the introduction to his work is dedicated almost exclusively to questions of religion. He begins, in his dedicatory epistle to “To the Right Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq.,” with notions of conversion,

Noble Sir,

You were pleased, among other Testimonies of your Christian and prudent care for the effectual Progress of this great Work of the Lord Jesus among the inhabitants of these Ends of the Earth, and goings down of the Sun, to Command me (for such an aspect have your so wise and seasonable Motions, to my heart) to Compile a Grammar of this Language, for the help of others who have an heart to study and learn the same, for the sake of Christ, and of the poor Souls of these Ruines of Mankinde, among whom the Lord is now about a Resurrection-work, and call them into his holy Kingdome.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Both Williams’s and Eliot’s texts are reprinted in *Origins of American Linguistics 1643–1914*, ed. Roy Harris (London, 1997), without page numbers.

⁷⁵ Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588), reprinted in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1600), ed. Ernest Rhys (7 vols., London, 1907), vol. 6, p. 168.

⁷⁶ Salmon, *Language and Society*, p. 157.

⁷⁷ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, vol. 6, p. 190.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 187.

⁷⁹ Harris (ed.), *Origins of American Linguistics*.

It is true that Eliot discusses religion more heavily than his compatriots, but we must remember that he was writing for the commercial purposes of the British Empire, and that the learning of the language was a tool in this overall enterprise. David Armitage, in *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, cites the existence of "... a host of English Protestant clerics who chronicled and promoted trade, colonization and conquest in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries."⁸⁰ This link is pertinently illustrated by Edward Bland, in his *Discovery of New Brittain* (1651), who declares the goal of the colony as "... the Advancement of Gods glory by conversion of the Indians, [and] the Augmentation of the English Common-wealth."⁸¹

The second general difference between the British and the French comes from Catholic and Protestant divergences on the nature of God's word. Basic notions of conversion and acceptance of religion in the Protestant Christian faith were fundamentally different from those of the Catholic missionaries. Edward Gray notes that for "Protestant missionaries it was ultimately the experience of divine grace that afforded entry into a new, pure church, and validity of this experience had to be judged by church members according to the standards of Scripture." This state of affairs,

... made literacy a chief precondition for church membership. And while communicating Catholic doctrine posed unique and vexing problems, they were problems that paled in comparison with the demands of creating and disseminating the Bible in an Indian language. For it was perhaps this burden more than any other that ultimately distinguished the spread of Christianity in Puritan New England from that in Catholic New France.⁸²

Taking this to its extreme, then, means that for Protestants, the work of conversion was only partly in their hands.⁸³ Once the English had compiled the secrets of the Protestant faith in native languages, it was in many ways the responsibility of the natives to convert themselves. Thus, there is a rhetoric of partial accountability in the texts of the British musings on conversion and language. Roger Williams, in an illustration of this quasi-passive attitude, discusses the fact that "... it pleased

⁸⁰ David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 64. Among these were George Benson, Patrick Copland, Richard Crakanthorpe, William Crashaw, John Donne, Robert Gray, and William Symonds.

⁸¹ Edward Bland, *The Discovery of New Brittain* (London, 1651), "To the reader."

⁸² Gray, *New World Babel*, p. 55.

⁸³ It must also be noted that for the British, there were no missionaries who had made the voyage expressly for the conversion of the natives, as in France. Instead, "those who did proselytize among Indians did so as a subordinate activity to their primary service to specific English congregations"; Gray, *New World Babel*, 45. Also see James Axtell, *The Invasion Within* (New York, 1985), p. 220; a further reference on British-Indian relations is H.C. Porter, *The Inconstant Savage: England and the North American 1500-1660* (London, 1979).

God to bring that mighty *Continent of America* to light,” and notes that the Indians are excited, for they hear that the English used to live in similar misery, and then “... received from God, Clothes, Bookes, &c they are greatly affected with a secret hope concerning themselves.”⁸⁴ Thomas Harriot notes this personal relationship to the Word: “I told them that the booke materially and of it selfe was not of any such vertue, as I thought they did conceive, but onely the doctrine therin contained ...,” a fact which the natives then take to the extreme, for, “... many would be glad to touch it, to embrace it, to kisse it, to holde it to their breastes and heades, and stroke all over their body with it, to shew their hungry desire of that knowledge which was spoken of.”⁸⁵ Thus, while one need not go as far as this nearly sexual relationship to the scriptures, ultimately the understanding or not of the word of God is in the hands of those who wish to embrace the faith. John Eliot takes this notion to its furthest point in his attempt, in the middle of the seventeenth century, to translate the entire Bible into the Massachusett language. The salvation or damnation of the American natives, for the British, depends only in part on the actions of Puritan missionaries.

From here, as noted above, there are certainly internal differences among the British treatments of languages. Williams, for example, tends to place the accent on the creation of a New England. The word appears in the title of his work, and there are many allusions to the links between America and England. An example comes when he states that “... to that great point of their Conversion so much to bee longed for, and by all New-English so much pretended, and I hope in Truth.”⁸⁶ Even in New France, where the attention to the meaning of the colonial term was quite strong, there is never any reference to a “Nouveau-Français.” Harriot, however, tends to envision the mission in almost exclusively mercantile terms, as the majority of his text treats ways, as he states, for potential colonists to “inrich your selves.”⁸⁷ Finally, there are certain colonists who express their vision of language, conversion, and commerce in primarily religious terms, such as Eliot.

In sum, divergent French and British views on language can generally be traced to the fundamental differences between the Protestant and Catholic relationships to the Word. While the Catholic faith placed the knowledge of the faith in the hands of an elite clergy, the opposite was true of Reform thinking.

While it is true, then, that the French attention to language was one that followed the conversion process from beginning to end, it is also evident that the relationship to language in the creation of a New France differed according to the author concerned. The Jesuits tended to relate their linguistic practices, and their notions of identity, to the Roman model. The Recollects, especially in Sagard’s text, primarily conceive language in French terms, making the *Dictionnaire* a fascinating addition to seventeenth-century French discussions of language.

⁸⁴ Harris (ed.), *Origins of American Linguistics*.

⁸⁵ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, vol. 6, p. 190.

⁸⁶ Harris (ed.), *Origins of American Linguistics*.

⁸⁷ Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, vol. 6, p. 167.

For all, the languages of the New World would pose some of the greatest difficulties encountered by European explorers and colonists. Sagard notes a general sentiment when he cites the mark of “Le peché des ambitieux Babyloniens” [the sin of the ambitious Babylonians] in the New World.⁸⁸ The ways in which Europeans treated these difficulties are multifarious, but they have as their root the removal of the obstacle of language. European colonists’ approaches to this, whether in the careful study of the French and to some extent the English, or the official ignorance of the Spanish, tell us much about each national-and internal-relationship to language, identity, and conversion.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Sagard, *Dictionaire*, p. 3.

⁸⁹ As in the Spanish *Requerimiento*, an official document drafted from the earliest days of contact, stating that all Indians encountered should accept the rule of Spain and the pope and that, if they do not, they would be made slaves as would all of their family “contains at its core the conviction that there is no serious language barrier between the Indians and the Europeans.” See Greenblatt, *Learning*, p. 29.

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PART 2

Renewal and Religion

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Chapter 3

Nos Ancêtres Les Américains

Marc Lescarbot and the Amerindian Mirror

Of the authors discussed in this book, Marc Lescarbot's vision of *La Nouvelle-France* is the most complex, fascinating, and far-reaching.¹ In comparing Lescarbot's treatment of the Amerindian to that of Champlain, as in our first chapter, it is tempting to see his understanding of the aboriginal peoples of America as a sensitive humanist attempt to comprehend difference. Champlain's dismissal of American natives in his *Voyages* as "... sans foy, ni loy, ni la cognoissance du vray Dieu" [... without faith, law, or knowledge of the true God], is in stark contrast to Lescarbot's appraisal in the *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* that "... si nous les appelons communement sauvages, c'est par un mot abusive, & qu'ilz ne meritent pas, n'étans rien moins que cela" [... if we commonly call them Savages, the word is abusive and unmerited, for they are anything but that].² It would appear from this that the two are at opposite poles of the spectrum of cultural perception. Indeed, Lescarbot has long been viewed as one of the most learned and culturally insightful authors of the colony. In 1744, the Jesuit priest and royal envoy to New France, Father Charlevoix, hailed Lescarbot's *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* in his text of the same name, proclaiming that "... jamais on ne comprit mieux de quelle ressource peut être dans un nouvel Etablissement, un esprit cultivé par l'étude, que le zèle de l'Etat engage à se servir de ses connoissances & de ses réflexions" [... never has it been clearer what help a cultivated mind, driven by a love for the state to use his knowledge and thoughts, can be to a new Establishment].³ Normand Doiron's modern assessment that Lescarbot "... invokes [for the natives] all of humanist culture" adds to this.⁴ Lescarbot's work, especially Book VI of

¹ A preliminary and quite different version of this chapter, presented at the annual conference of the Society for Interdisciplinary French Seventeenth Century Studies (SE-17) in 2006, was published with the acts of that meeting in *Cahiers du dix-septième: an Interdisciplinary Journal* in Winter 2008.

² Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain/Oeuvres* (Toronto, 1922–36), vol. 1, p. 258. Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France/Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (Toronto, 1907), vol. 1, pp. 230, 33. For Champlain, translations appear on the same page of this edition; for Lescarbot, citations refer to French original, then English translation.

³ Père Charlevoix, *Histoire et description generale de la nouvelle france, avec le journal historique d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'amerique septentrionale, Par le P. de Charlevoix, de la compagnie de jesus* (Paris, 1744), p. 6 (my translation).

⁴ Normand Doiron, *L'Art de voyager: Le déplacement à l'époque classique* (Paris, 1995), p. 116 (my translation). See also note 24.

the *Histoire*, which is dedicated to Amerindian mores, has long been seen as an in-depth and perceptive hymn to the peoples of the new colony. The following chapter attempts to deepen the discussion of Lescarbot's learned and attentive discussion of the Amerindians, arguing that it is a step in his attempt to infuse the term *New France* with meaning.

In a recent book-length study on Lescarbot, Eric Thierry clearly frames the author's work in relation to his disappointment with modern France, depicting Lescarbot as a "French intellectual haunted by the civil wars, obsessed with a return to peace, and animated by an intense spiritual quest..." and concluding that the *Histoire* is "... the particularly rich expression of the anguish and dreams of a humanist placed in the transitional period between the Renaissance and French Classicism."⁵ Lescarbot's vision of New France must be framed in these terms. For the lawyer/humanist, France was ailing, due to the lingering pain of the Wars and the ambient decadence of its inhabitants. Directly informed by Renaissance humanist historiography, Lescarbot believed that the sole method of repairing all that was out of order was a reliance on history and a return to an earlier, purer past.

In an effort to revisit the past as a remedy for the present in the *Histoire*, Lescarbot presents an argument in support of a theory of origins that makes his text one of the most ingenious and intricate of early-modern French travel accounts. The movement is as follows: first, it must be clearly established that the ancestors of the French are the Gauls. Second, one must understand that the Gauls and the Amerindians share the same ancestor, who is none other than Noah. Thus, despite the clear markers of "savagery" they present, the aboriginal peoples of America represent an earlier, less civilized, but purer version of Lescarbot's countrymen. The *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, then, reveals an idyllic French past made possible by a reunion with an idealized American present. In the development necessary to find this imaginary American brother, however, Native American realities are erased. One scholar has described the sixth book of the *Histoire* as an attempt to "preserve the knowledge of an anthropological patrimony the disappearance of which [Lescarbot] predicts following the meeting between the natives and the French."⁶ We will suggest in this chapter that he is also an actor in that disappearance.⁷

⁵ Eric Thierry, *Marc Lescarbot: Un homme de plume au service de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris: 2001).

⁶ Paolo Carile, "Le transfert imaginaire dans l'*Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* de Marc Lescarbot," in Denys Delâge and Laurier Turgeon (eds), *Transferts culturels et métissages Amérique/Europe, XVIe–XXe siècle / Cultural transfer, America and Europe: 500 years of interculturalization* (Quebec, 1996), pp. 305–25. Carile also has a book-length study of travel writing to New France in which he discusses the various cultural "hinderances" to a full understanding of the American Other. Paolo Carile, *Lo sguardo impedito: studi sulle relazioni di viaggio in "Nouvelle-France" e sull letteratura popolare* (Fasano, 1987).

⁷ Since my early work in the late 1990s and original discussion of this topic at the 2003 conference of the British Association for Canadian Studies at The University of Leeds, there has been interesting parallel work done concerning similar ideas to those presented

*The Unnatural Reflections of France and America**Le Miroir*

In 1604, Jean de Biencourt, Sieur de Poutrincourt, an ally of Henry IV and a close friend of the Royal Envoy Sieur de Monts, travelled to New France in hopes of creating an agricultural colony to which he could retire with his family. Having established camp at Port Royal, in the territory of the *Armouchiquois*, he undertook to find the ideal settlement.⁸ In the course of his recognizance, Poutrincourt had regular contact with the surrounding natives. These contacts, as with many in the New World, were filled with the protocol of gift-giving. On one stop in the *Baye de Marchin*, Poutrincourt encounters an Etchimin *Capitaine* called Olmechin, and bestows upon him “un habit complet” [a complete suit] of European clothing.⁹ The Amerindian “... se regardoit en un miroir, & rioit de se voir ainsi” [... looked in a mirror, and laughed to see himself like this].¹⁰ Following his initial levity, however, the native feels restricted in the clothes, and “... quand il fut retourné aux cabannes il le distribua à plusieurs de ses gens, afin qu’un seul n’en fût pas trop empêché” [... on his return to the lodges he distributed (the suit) among several of his people, in order that no one man might be too much impeded by it].¹¹ Lescarbot follows the anecdote with a moral:

Ceci devoit servir de leçon à tant de mignons & mignones de deçà, à qui il faut faire des habits & corselets durs comme bois, où le corps est si misérablement gehenné, qu’ilz sont dans leurs vêtements inhabiles à toutes bonnes choses.

[And this may well serve as a lesson to the many fops of both sexes in this country, who must needs have suits and corslets as stiff as wood, wherein their bodies are so miserably tormented that when once clothed they are unfit for any good action.]¹²

For the author of the *Histoire*, Poutrincourt has made a miscalculation. The error in judgment is not the desire to place upon the native the customs of the European, which Lescarbot would find laudable, but rather it comes in the specific sartorial choice Poutrincourt has made. Poutrincourt has attempted to bestow upon the

here. See, most notably, the discussion of “fraternal” tendencies in Lescarbot’s treatment of the natives by Marie-Christine Pioffet: “*Gaulois et Souriquois à travers les mailles de la généalogie lescarbotienne*” in Pierre Guillaume and Laurier Turgeon (eds), *Regards croisés sur le Canada et la France: voyages et relations du XVIe au XXe siècle: actes des Congrès des sociétés historiques et scientifiques, La Rochelle, 2005* (Paris, 2007), pp. 38–62. See also notes 23, 81.

⁸ Modern-day Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia.

⁹ For this episode, see Lescarbot, *History of New France*, pp. 559, 328.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 559. My translation here was needed to update from the dated English in Grant’s original: ‘glass’ for mirror.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 559, 328.

¹² Ibid., pp. 559, 328.

American a type of unchanged French culture which reflects the worst aspects of its current decadence. Consequently, European (Lescarbot) and Amerindian (Olmechin) look in the same mirror at a series of European characteristics—dress, vanity, unfitness for “action”—and produce a scornful laugh. In fact, Lescarbot is once again performing what Gabriel Sagard called a *réflexion* on the self in the citation above our introductory chapter. In this instance however, “reflection” carries the dual meaning of contemplating a given topic, and contemplating one’s image in a mirror. In the *Histoire*, the reflective mirror sparks a reflection on identity.

Lescarbot has made a move here that follows him throughout the his text: create a sympathetic, “unsavage” (and imaginary) native with whom he can gaze on the shortcomings of France, and ultimately with whom he can work in order to create a New France of infinite possibilities. The implications and consequences of such a move are the subject of this chapter.

Modern France

Can one possibly transport modern France to the New World? Not in its current form. Like the clothes Poutrincourt attempts to place on Olmechin, France is a suit unworthy of being worn. In an early chapter, Lescarbot cries out against “La lacheté de nôtre siècle” [Faint-heartedness of our age]. He laments that

... les differens pour la Religion, & les troubles étans survenus, noz François parmy ces longues alarmes ont esté tellement occupez, qu’en une division vniverselle il a esté bien difficile de viser au dehors, faisant vn chacun beaucoup de conserver ce qui luy étoit acquis, & vivre chez soy-même.

[... since then religious disputes and troubles having arisen, our French, amid these alarms have had their hands so full that in a universal discord it has been very difficult to take a wide outlook, since a man did well to keep what he had, and to live peaceably at home.]¹³

Although France may be happily free of the Wars, much is still to be done, for “... il ne se trouve quasi personne (j’enten de ceux qui ont du credit en Cour) qui favorise ce dessein, soit en privé, soit envers sa Majesté” [... yet almost no one can be found (of those at least who have influence at court) who favours this design either in private or before his Majesty].¹⁴ This division between the French spirit of maritime history and the present is accentuated throughout the text. In the dedication, “A la France” [To France], Lescarbot cites the idyllic past when France was the “Bel oeil de l’Vnivers, Ancienne nourrice des lettres & des armes” [Beautiful center of the Universe, former nurse of letters and arms].¹⁵ In the present, his compatriots are

¹³ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 234, 40.

¹⁴ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 234, 40–41.

¹⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 387. (my translation as the English text does not appear in the bilingual edition)

a people who “... trouvent toutes choses grandes impossible ...” [... find all great things impossible ...].¹⁶ France has fallen dangerously behind in the colonial race. As he notes, “L’Espagnol auparavant foible, par nôtre nonchalance s’est rendu puissant en l’Orient et l’Occident” [The Spaniard, aforesaid feeble, through our carelessness has made himself powerful East and West alike].¹⁷ He admonishes the subjects of France in a missive to the king in the opening of the *Histoire*,

Quoy, SIRE, noz Roys vos grans ayeuls auront-ils epuisé la France d’hommes & de tresors, & exposé leurs vies à la mort pour conserver la religion aux peuples Orientaux; Et nous n’aurons pas le même zele à rendre Chrétiens ceux de l’Occident, qui nous donnent volontairement leurs terres, & nous tendent les bras il y a cent ans passez?

[What, Sire, have our Kings, your great ancestors, drained France of men and treasure, and exposed their lives unto the death to preserve religion to the peoples of the East; and shall we lack the same zeal to Christianise the peoples of the West, who of their own will give us their lands, and now for a hundred years passed have been holding out their hands to us?]¹⁸

They are indolent: “On voudroit trouver les thresors d’Atabalippa sans travail & sans peine, mais on y vient trop tard, & pour en trouver il faut chercher, il faut faire de la dépense, ce que les grans ne veulent pas” [They would like to find the treasures of Atabalippa without labour and without trouble, but they arrive too late, and to find such, search and outlay are necessary, which our nobles do not wish to bestow].¹⁹ When asked to participate in the great enterprise of New France, Lescarbot’s compatriots simply note that in Canada “... il n’y a point les violons, les masquarades, les danses, les palais, les villes, & les beaux batimens de France” [There are certainly no violins, no masquerades, no dances, no palaces, no towns, and no goodly buildings as in France].²⁰ If one listens to such talk, “... qui les en voudroit croire, jamais on ne feroit rien” [... and whoso is willing to believe them will never do anything whatever].²¹ The French are far more interested in the courtly life than in the colonial opportunity presented to them. He laments the result of this in his poem “Sur Le Voyage de Canada” [On the Voyage to Canada]:

Quittons aux faineans, à ces masses sans coeur,
A la peste, à la faim, aux ebats du vainqueur.
Au vice, au desespoir, cette campagne usee,
Haine des gens de bien, du monde la risee.

¹⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 218, 15.

¹⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 211, 4–5.

¹⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 212, 5–6.

¹⁹ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 234, 41.

²⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 217, 15.

²¹ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 218, 15.

[Let us leave these indolent heartless masses,
 Leave the plague, hunger, and taunts of the victor,
 Let us leave vice, hopelessness, and this expired countryside,
 Hated by the virtuous, laughingstock of the world.]²²

He ends the poem “Adieu à la France,” with a cry to the French: “Sommeillez vous, hélas!”²³

The Amerindian

Despite the apparently positive vision of the American natives in the *Histoire*, there are also many instances of genuine fear of their dangerous “savagery.”²⁴ The section preceding the aforementioned exchange between Olmechin and Poutrincourt shows Lescarbot’s complimentary discussion of the natives, when read in isolation, to be misleading. Prior to the gift-giving ceremony, he warns the reader that

Ilz sont cauteleux, larrons, & traitres, & quoy qu’ils soyent nuds, on ne se peut garder de leurs mains: car son on detourne tans soit peu l’oeil, & voyent l’occasion de dérober quelque couteau, hache, ou autre chose, ilz n’y manqueront point, & mettront le larrecin entre leurs fesses, ou le cacheront souz le sable avec le pied si dextrement, qu’on ne s’en appercevra point.

[They are crafty, thievish, and treacherous, and naked though they may be, one cannot escape from their fingers; for if one turns his away his gaze but for a moment, and they see a chance of stealing a knife, hatchet, or anything else, they will never fail to do so, and will put the theft between their buttocks, or hide it in the sand with their foot so cunningly that one will not perceive it.]

From here, Lescarbot generalizes to all Amerindians: “J’ay leu en quelque voyage de la Floride, que ceux de cette province sont de mesme naturel, & ont la meme industrie de dérober” [I have read in a book of travels to Florida that the natives of that province are of the same nature, and use the same industry in thieving]. He concludes that “Ce peuple est tel qu’il le faut traiter avec terreur: car par amitié si

²² Ibid., vol. 2, p. 387. (my translation is necessary as this does not appear in the English of the Champlain Society edition)

²³ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 310, 533. New France also provides an outlet for the idle in France.

²⁴ It is in this area that I would disagree with Martin Gosman, who advances that Lescarbot refuses all dissemblance with the Amerindians in his text. Rather than effect an immediate and complete resemblance, Lescarbot proposes the *possibility* of complete resemblance, if the French are willing and able to carry it out. See Martin Gosman, “Espace autre: Espace français: Le Refus de la dissemblance dans L’Histoire de la Nouvelle-France de Marc Lescarbot,” in Jaap Lintvelt and François Paré (eds), *Frontières flottantes: Lieu et espace dans les cultures francophones du Canada/Shifting Boundaries: Place and Space in the Francophone Cultures of Canada* (Amsterdam, 2001), pp. 33–47.

on leur donne trop d'accès ils machineront quelque surprise, comme s'est reconu en plusieurs occasions, ainsi que nous avons veu ci-dessus & verrons encore ci-après" [These people are of such a nature that they must be worked on by fear, for if one tries friendship and gives them too easy access, they will plan some treachery ... as we have seen above and shall see again later on].²⁵ These defects are in fact a part of the Amerindians' nature for the author. Like the vision of the French likeness in the mirror, the initial reflection of the natives is one of dissatisfaction.

Lescarbot imagines America as a mirror reflective of a civilizing "Frenchness" from which the Amerindian would benefit. First, though, it is necessary to effect a reparation of both French and Amerindian chaos. In his recent book *Mapping Discord*, Jeffrey N. Peters inscribes Champlain's cartographic renderings of New France within the French crown's "rhetorical efforts to replace the disordered units of the phenomenal world—war-torn France before the Edict of Nantes, the fragmented terrain and religious plurality of New France—with representations of its own design."²⁶ A very similar mechanism is at work in Lescarbot. *The Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* treats two entities—which *should be*, according to Lescarbot the Frenchman who delivers civilization and Christianity, and the naturally receptive Amerindian—and endeavors to create them textually. The *Histoire* is an attempt to erase disorder, on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Renaissance Influence, Amerindian Origins, and the French Past

Crucial to an understanding of Lescarbot's treatment of the past as reparative and the Amerindians' place in this reparation is a comprehension of his direct influences, and relevant debates circulating in the early seventeenth century. The author's discussion is illuminated when read in conjunction with three influential aspects of his time: Renaissance historiography, the European politicization of Amerindian origins, and the origins of the French.

Renaissance Historiography: The Past as a Remedy for the Present

Born around 1570, Marc Lescarbot received a very thorough classical education first in his hometown of Vervins, then in Laon, and finally in Paris. He learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and studied ancient and modern literatures before studying canon and civil law, and graduated as a lawyer in 1598. He was called to the *Parlement de Paris* as an attorney in 1599. His works include several translations, a small amount of poetry, and the six-hundred-page *Histoire de la*

²⁵ Lescarbot, vol. 2, pp. 327, 558–9.

²⁶ Jeffrey N. Peters, *Mapping Discord: Allegorical Cartography in Early-Modern French Writing* (Newark, 2004), p. 66.

Nouvelle-France published in 1609, then in 1611–12, and 1617–18.²⁷ The latter is an extraordinarily eloquent defense of the colony's possibilities for the metropolis. In 1606, Lescarbot embarked on the *Jonas* for New France with his friend and benefactor, the aforementioned Poutrincourt, to participate in an expedition sponsored by the king's Lieutenant de Monts. The party arrived at *Port Royal* in May 1606, where they spent roughly a year between the territory of the Souriquois and the Almouchiquois of the Algonquian linguistic group, tribes referred to as Micmac today. In 1607, de Monts's monopoly was revoked, and the party was forced to return to France in July of that year. This setback led the author to compose, on the advice of friends, his *magnum opus*. The text includes six books, the first three of which treat past French voyages, the fourth Lescarbot's tenure in Canada, the fifth the advancements since his departure, and the sixth native mores.

Lescarbot was highly influenced by late Renaissance historiography, especially in his desire to repair the present through the past, and a belief in human history as a story of progress. These authors' concerns were born of a distrust of medieval historiography, which greatly affected their views on origins, and consequently informed those of Lescarbot.²⁸

The move towards this new vision of history begins with the enthusiastic philological mind of Guillaume Budé, for whom medieval writings appeared mystical and uncritical. Budé, through his *Annotations on the Pandects* and *The As and its Parts* of 1514, is the starting point in France of a philological and historiographical tradition that, though it was inherited from Italy, was quickly transformed through contact with French legal culture. Budé's interest in history, in part transmitted by the Italians, was a departure from the chronicles of the Middle Ages, from what Donald Kelley terms "drum and trumpet history."²⁹ The Italian inheritance included, from such historians as Flavio Biondo, the critical reading of texts, history conceived principally as the reconstruction of the political past, disdain for medieval chroniclers, and finally, the political use of history in the present. In this critical reading of texts, the French humanists turned to the law, especially to that of Rome. First Budé, and then Jacques Cujas in Toulouse and

²⁷ For useful summaries of Lescarbot's life, two rather dated but helpful areas to begin are René Baudry's entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto, 1966); and H.P. Biggar's introduction to the Champlain Society edition of the *Histoire*. There existed, according to Baudry, a biography of Lescarbot written by the poet Guillaume Colletet, but this has unfortunately been lost. Two modern studies will help deepen the reader's understanding of the author: the above book by Eric Thierry, as well as Bernard Emont, *Marc Lescarbot: mythes et rêves fondateurs de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris, 2002).

²⁸ The two major texts concerning the contribution of the humanist *robe* jurists of the sixteenth century to modern historiography are George Huppert, *The Idea of Perfect History* (Urbana, 1970), and Donald Kelley, *The Foundation of Modern Historical Scholarship* (New York, 1970).

²⁹ Kelley, *The Foundations*, p. 10.

Andrea Alciato in Bourges, applied the philological method to a critical revision of Roman institutions.

The beginnings of this loose movement, then, were in the study of law and sources. A return to legal history and a look only at contemporary sources, with strict critical standards as to which sources could be trusted, was at the base of further study. From here, the method was applied to various other subjects, notably to the history of France. The methods of this group, largely due to the Wars of Religion, led them to examine the history of their nation as an explanation of current woes. This is the motivation behind, for example, Etienne Pasquier's *Recherches de la France*, first published in 1560. Pasquier proclaims,

... je pense avoir esté le premier des nostres (je le diray par occasion, non par vanterie) qui ay defriché plusieurs anciennetez obscures de cette France, tant par la venue des nations estrangeres aux Gaules, que de l'introduction des Parlemens, Pairies, Apanages, Maires du Palais.

[... I believe to be the first among us (I say it in passing, and not in boasting) to have clarified certain obscure aspects of our past, both by the arrival of foreign nations to Gaul, and the introduction of Parlements, Titles, and Honors).]³⁰

François Hotman, in the *Franco-Gallia* (1574), explains his project as bringing, through history "... quelque seau d'eau pour esteindre le feu embrasé" [... some water to put out the burning fire].³¹ His motivation lies in the division of the Wars, for while France was once the center of European interest, "... aujourd'hui ils l'ont en horreur" [... today they despise her].³² These two historians applied the *mos gallicus* method to a reconstruction of a French national past, in the hopes of elaborating a portrait of the nation capable of transcending current despair. Underlying such a conception of history is also the idea of historiography as moral lesson. This of course is not new to the sixteenth-century historians. The difference between this didactic vision and that of the medieval chroniclers, however, was the historical truth attributed to examples through the strict attention to sources. As we will see below, Lescarbot relies heavily on written authority to substantiate his vision of America.

Progress

Lescarbot's influences can be seen clearly in the area of *histoire universelle*, as described in Jean Bodin's *Méthode de l'histoire* and Lancelot Voisin de la Popelinière's *Histoire des Histoires*. Both advance an idea of human history that is progressive and all-inclusive. In short, the history of mankind, rather than being in decline, represents growth.

³⁰ Etienne Pasquier, *Les Recherches de France* (Paris, 1996), p. 252. (my translation)

³¹ Francois Hotman, *De la Gaule Française/Franco-gallia* (Paris, 1991), p. 15. (my translation)

³² Ibid., p. 15. (my translation)

La Popelinière, in *L'Idée de l'histoire Accomplie*, states that in relation to past civilizations “... le temps qui s’est escoulé depuis eux jusques icy, nous doit rendre superieurs en toutes choses” [... the time that has passed until now should render us superior in all things].³³ He continues, adding that history

... nous donne de surcroist, la cognoissance de tant de choses rares et excellentes, que les premiers ont ignoré et que la Nature a produit depuis eux. Comme elle n’esclost ses graces tout à un coup. Mais quand, à qui et comme il luy plaist.

[... gives us, in addition, the knowledge of so many rare and excellent things, that earlier men did not know and that Nature has produced since them. She does not present her graces all at once, but when, and to whom she pleases.]³⁴

Bodin notes in his *Méthode de l'Histoire* (1566) that there is “... qu’un seul moyen d’établir des lois et de gouverner une cite” [... only one method to establish laws and to govern]: “... réunir les lois de toutes les autres Républiques (ou du moins des plus illustres) et de confier à des hommes prudents le soin de la comparer entre elles pour en tirer la forme la meilleure” [unite the laws of all the other Republics (or at least the most illustrious) and to confide the care of their comparison to wise men who can take the best from them].³⁵

He continues,

Quant à l’histoire universelle, elle raconte les exploits de plusieurs hommes ou de plusieurs cités, et ceci de deux manieres differentes, soit en comparant plusieurs peuples, comme les Perses, les Grecs et les Egyptiens, soit en étudiant tous ceux dont les gestes nous ont été transmis.

[As to the universal history, it recounts the exploits of several men or of several cities, and this in different ways, either by comparing many peoples, such as the Persians, the Greeks, and the Egyptians, or by studying those whose actions have been communicated to us.]³⁶

The study of “primitive” cultures

Along with the cult of progress and a universal knowledge comes the assertion that we can contribute to advancement in our own time through a knowledge of the past, including an understanding of “primitive” cultures. The New World is a logical extension of such a project, and indeed, La Popelinière professes a desire to explore America in order to further “... la droicte et entière cognoissance des

³³ La Popelinière, *L'Histoire des histoires avec L'idée de l'histoire accomplie* (Paris, 1989), p. 13. (my translation)

³⁴ Ibid., p. 13. (my translation)

³⁵ Jean Bodin, *La Méthode de l'histoire*, ed. Pierre Mesnard (Paris, 1941), p. XXXI [usually these appear lower-case; confirm that upper-case is correct]. (my translation)

³⁶ Ibid., p. 4. (my translation)

homes” [... the right and full knowledge of men].³⁷ “Primitive” peoples find their place here as representatives of earlier forms of civilization. Bodin announces that in his book “... nous trouverons les Americains, les habitants de l’Afrique Australe et des Indes dont les histoires seront une lecture aussi utile qu’agréable” [... we will find the Americans, the inhabitants of Southern Africa, and the Indies, the histories of which will provide useful and pleasant reading].³⁸

Nowhere is the enthusiasm for possibilities of cultural expansion more evident than in the lawyer-humanist Lescarbot, who, in his defence of colonization exclaims “Allons où le bon heur & le ciel nous appelle; Et provignons au loin une France plus belle” [Let us go where happiness and heaven call us; Let us create in the distance a more beautiful France].³⁹ He furthers this desire in the clear assertion cited in our introduction that “Rien ne sert de qualifier une NOUVELLE-FRANCE, pour estre un nom en l’air & en peinture seulement” [It is of no avail to give the name of New France, if it remains a name alone, and solely in a painted show].⁴⁰ The meaning of that New France will be found through a return, using his learning and the presence of the Amerindians, to a purer, original “Frenchness,” one which is free of current woes.

The politicization of Amerindian origins: The European context

Giuliano Gliozzi noted long ago that in early-modern Europe, “There are no self-respecting travel accounts that do not devote one of their primary chapters to a discussion of the problem of the ‘origins of the Americans’.”⁴¹ Lescarbot’s

³⁷ La Popeliniere, cited in Huppert, Appendix II, p. 196. (my translation)

³⁸ Bodin, *La Méthode de l’Histoire*, 256. (my translation)

³⁹ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 2, p. 387 (my translation as the English text does not appear in the bilingual edition)

⁴⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 214, 10.

⁴¹ Giuliano Gliozzi, *Adam et le nouveau monde. La naissance de l’anthropologie comme idéologie coloniale: des généalogies bibliques aux théories raciales (1500–1700)* (Lecques, 2000), p. 14. The major titles on the issue are Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* (London, 1982); Lee Eldridge Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492–1729* (Austin, 1967); Benjamin Braude, “The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3:54 (1997): 103–42. Gliozzi’s treatment, not available in English, is perhaps the most complete discussion of various European points of view. His reading, which remains quite convincing, posits that beyond a desire to “understand” Amerindians, a discussion of their origins is a result of a desire for the wealth and glory of colonizing America. Even if one does not sympathize with the Marxist analysis at work in Gliozzi’s book, the Europeans certainly used the Amerindian origins for their own purposes. Pagden focuses on more Aristotelian categories for understanding the Indian and posits that, while there was a genuine desire for understanding on the part of Europeans, cultural incommensurability would always be an obstacle. Braude’s recent article is a necessary enlivening of the discussion, and he connects it with the modern construction of race. Huddleston is a useful and concise summary of European debates.



Fig. 3.1 Images of American Indians from Father Joseph Lafiteau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*, trans. and ed. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1974), vol. 1, p. 73. Image used with kind permission of the Champlain Society.

discussion of Amerindian beginnings, the first step in his creation of a poetic and progressive New France, is part of a larger European debate which spanned over two centuries. We argue here that, in the context of a debate which was often about anything but the “actual” nature of the Amerindians, but much more linked to political and religious concerns of individual authors, Lescarbot is far from being a more sensitive exception. His exploration of Amerindian origins is directly in line with the motivations of other European commentators.

Despite common thinking, the controversy concerning the origins of American natives essentially began nearly thirty years after Columbus first landed in America. Columbus died unaware that he had discovered a “New World.” This fact was only gradually realized, culminating in the dissemination of the reports of Magellan’s 1519–21 expedition. As one critic notes, at first there was no need to marvel at the New World and its New Men, because “... neither phenomenon was recognized as such.”⁴² Once the realization was made, however, of “The most astonishing meeting of our history,” as Tzvetan Todorov describes it, Europe, beginning with Spain, began to ask numerous questions concerning these people, the first of which was “... are they human?”⁴³ From here, the question of whether the natives were descendants of Adam, and therefore part of the humanity for which Jesus Christ was sacrificed, arose. In the face of such questions, the papacy was forced to issue strongly worded missives. Pope Paul III’s bull *Sublunus Deus (Veri Homines)* (1537) affirmed, among other things, that the Amerindians were indeed “truly men” who should not “in any way be enslaved” and who were “capable of understanding the Catholic faith.”⁴⁴ Despite certain divergent voices, such as Gomara in Spain, most European authors agreed that the natives were human and that they were susceptible to conversion. After all, does the Bible not report provocatively in John 10:16 Christ’s affirmation, “*Alias oves habeo qui non sunt ex hoc ovili*” [other sheep I have that are not of this fold]?⁴⁵

The European debate on the origins of the Amerindians goes beyond simple biblical quandaries, however. In general, this debate can be understood when examined from one of two vantage points: the theological or the political, and most often these elements were combined.⁴⁶ Schematically, the range of explanations

⁴² Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians*, p. 5. Eviatar Zerubavel, *Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America* (Brunswick, 1992).

⁴³ Tzvetan Todorov, *La conquête de l’Amérique. La question de l’autre* (Paris, 1982), p. 13. (my translation)

⁴⁴ Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York, 1976), p. 18. See also Olive Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton, 1984).

⁴⁵ See Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage*, p. 29 and Henri Baudet, *Paradise on Earth, Some Thoughts on European Images of non-European man*, trans. Elizabeth Wentholt (New Haven, 1965), p. 37.

⁴⁶ Here we follow Gliozzi’s major thesis that behind discussions of Amerindian origins were often questions of European power.

of Amerindian origins runs from indigenous and Oriental sources to Jewish, Carthaginian, Canaanite, Ophiric, Phoenician, Trojan, and Egyptian transoceanic migrations. For our purposes, what is most important to retain in discussing European visions of Amerindian origins are the ways in which the origins of the natives were seized upon by European thinkers to defend or refute one or another religious, political, or intellectual agenda. The examples that follow allow us perspective on Lescarbot's understanding of the American natives.

Religious Concerns

The theological questions were many: How, in the context of biblical migrations, did the natives arrive in the New World? How do they fit into a Christian vision dominated by an almost universal belief in Adam and Eve, and subsequently Noah, as the original ancestors of men, in which all inhabitants of the earth were known? Gregorio Garcia, a Dominican, in his *Origen de los Indios* published in 1607, reflected the multitude of available hypotheses, while reminding us that for the most part, the theories, at least in Spain which dominated the discussion, were based on two tenets. First we must accept that

... men and women had, and have, since the Beginning of the World, proceeded, and taken their beginning and origin from our first parents Adam and Eve; and subsequently from Noah and his sons, who were all who remained alive after the General Deluge.⁴⁷

Second, we must grant,

... that people now in the Indies, whom we call Indians, went to them from one of the three parts of the known world. The reason for this is that if the fourth part called America were inhabited at the beginning of the world, or before the Flood, in the time of Noah and his sons or grandsons, there would have been notice of it and the ancient Historians and Cosmographers would have mentioned it as they did the three said parts. But in old times they considered them uninhabited because they were below the Burning Zone. Thus we are forced to concede that the Indians went to the Indies from one of the aforementioned parts.⁴⁸

In the second condition, we must then include that the world was divided between Noah's sons after the Deluge, Asia going to Shem, Egypt and Africa to Ham, and Europe to Japheth.⁴⁹ Many theorists in Europe wished to attribute American

⁴⁷ Gregorio García, *Origen de los indios de el nuevo mundo, e Indias occidentales* 1607, 1729 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France: P ANGRAND-82.), p. 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴⁹ Colin Kidd reminds us, in *British Identities Before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 9, that “the first five verses of Genesis 10,” in which is described the division of the world among Noah's sons and their descendants, “constituted the fundamental text” by which Europeans sought their own origins as well.

origins to the cursed race of Ham beginning with the immensely influential *Omnium gentium mores* of Johann Boem (1520). Jacques Cartier, for example, advances in relation to the St. Lawrence estuary that "... in fine, I am inclined to believe that this is the land God gave to Cain."⁵⁰ Others, such as the Huguenot Urbain de Chauveton, took exception to such Canaanite theories, claiming that they slandered the American Indians.⁵¹

Despite Iberian dominance of the question, Europe in general certainly participated actively in the debate. Certain answers were extreme, such as Isaac de la Peyrère's assertion in his *Prae-Adamitae* (1655) that men probably existed before Adam, and that this race spread to America, escaping the deluge which destroyed the "sons of God."⁵² La Peyrère's revival of an ancient theory had much more to do with contemporary French religious and scientific politics than with a concern with Amerindians. The Jesuit Joseph de Acosta, in his *Historia natural y moral de la Indias* published in 1590, proposed a critical response to libertine views such as La Peyrère's. In order to find a biblical origin for the Americans, and therefore refute the heresy of the pre-Adamite view, Acosta proposes that in fact the Amerindians descended from Adam like the rest of us, and that a land bridge between the European/Asian continents and the Americas was the route by which the ancestors of the Amerindians found their present home.⁵³

For the British, one major area of interest was the idea that the Amerindians might be the descendents of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Such figures as John Dury, Menassah Ben Israel, and John Eliot all used this theory for one reason or another. For Dury and Ben Israel, drawing on accounts of American natives from Léry, Acosta, Benzoni, and others, it was clear that the Amerindians exhibited Israelite traits and customs, such as circumcision, levirate marriage, segregation of menstruating women, and traces of Hebrew language.⁵⁴ This was used religiously to promote tolerance, and politically to support the movement for the readmission of the Jews to England. Ben Israel believed that the current age was soon to end and that during the coming messianic era, the Jews would be called back to found

⁵⁰ Jacques Cartier, *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier*, ed. Ramsay Cook (Toronto, 1993), pp. 9–10.

⁵¹ See Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage*, p. 33.

⁵² See Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, p. 21, and especially Richard Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work and Influence* (Leiden, 1987). La Peyrère was a Huguenot who, amidst the violent reaction to his book, was forced to convert to Catholicism, retract his writings, and spend the remaining years of his life in a monastery. Also see Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: the Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991).

⁵³ See Gliozzi, *Adam et le Nouveau Monde*, p. 311.

⁵⁴ On the British use of such theories, see the work of Richard W. Cogley, especially "The Ancestry of the American Indians: Thomas Thorowgood's *Jewes in America* (1650) and *Jews in America* (1660)," in *English Literary Renaissance* 35:2 (2005): 304–30; and "John Eliot and the Origins of the American Indians," in *Early American Literature* 21:3 (1986): 210–26.

a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Before this could happen, though, the descendants of Joseph had to be spread throughout the world. The presence of Jews in America and their readmission to England were thus a part of the Jewish destiny. John Dury was an advocate of Ben Israel's, but to differing ends; the Protestant clergyman used the notion of Jews in America to advocate their readmission to England in hopes that contact with the English would lead to their conversion to Puritanism.⁵⁵ Versions of the Ten Lost Tribes theory influenced the important New England clergyman John Cotton. Puritan thought in America at the time essentially stated that the Amerindians would be granted grace directly by God, if worthy, at the end of our age, supposed to arrive around 1650. The influential Boston preacher's interpretation of the Book of Revelation stated that the Jews would be converted before the Gentiles, and since the Americans were generally considered to be Gentiles, they were second in line for grace. The result of this was that there was, as Richard Cogley notes, a "seal on their hearts" until the conversion of the Jews. Evangelization and missionary work were deemed useless by many New Englanders, since there were many prerequisites to be filled before the conversion of the Americans. However, John Eliot, who would later be called the "Apostle to the Indians," was seduced by links between the Amerindians and the Jews. If in fact they were of Jewish origin, then they were first in line for grace, and they needed preparation. Eliot therefore set out to undertake this preparation, bringing the word of his god to the Amerindians.⁵⁶

Political Uses of Amerindian Origins

These religious considerations were often founded upon more earthly worries. Politically, Spanish dominance was the question at hand when the origins of Amerindians arose. Indeed, Pope Alexander the VI, on May 4, 1493 published the bull *Inter coetera*, which effectively gave to the Spanish "all lands discovered and to be discovered to the West of the Azores."⁵⁷ This monopoly on American spoils angered the rest of Europe. Thus, Spanish control over America, and the attempt to wrest at least some of that dominance from the Iberian grasp, was at the heart of many of the writings on America until well into the seventeenth century.

Political controversy and the origins of the Americans effectively began with a major error made in a promise by Isabella of Spain to Columbus. The queen grants the following to the explorer: "We make you our Viceroy and Governor, and after your death, your children and descendants and successors one after the other, of the Islands and Mainlands, discovered and still to be discovered, in this Ocean sea

⁵⁵ Cogley, "Ancestry," pp. 316–17

⁵⁶ See Cogley, "John Eliot and the Origins," pp. 210–13.

⁵⁷ Juan de Pereyra, *Politica Indiana* (1648), ed. Miguel Angel Ochoa Brun (Madrid, 1972), 1st edition, *Disputation de Indiarum jure, 1629–1639*; cited in Gliozzi, *Adam et le Nouveau Monde*, p. 27.

near the Indies.”⁵⁸ When Columbus’s successors invoked their rights to the above privileges, however, the Spanish monarchy had a problem on their hands. They had no idea how much gold might be found in America at the time of Isabella’s early promise. By 1535, it was clear that the queen had been overly generous. In stepped Charles Quint’s official historian, Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez, who posited that if the Spanish could prove that their presence in said lands predated the Columbian voyages, then the crown would owe nothing to the explorer’s descendants. In order to support this, Oviedo went in search of origins, and, stretching antique sources, posited first that the Spanish kings descended from Noah’s grandson Tubal, and that twelfth in line on that family tree was a certain *Hespéros*. From here he shows, through a series of erudite citations, that the islands called the *Hespérides* are in fact the Indies. Finally, invoking the ancient tradition by which all princes named their provinces and lands after themselves, Oviedo concludes that *Hespéros* most certainly inhabited the *Hespérides*, proving Spanish presence in the Americas from at least its twelfth monarch. Therefore, the present Spanish crown owed Columbus’s successors nothing, since he had done no more than to re-discover Spanish soil.⁵⁹

This theory was attacked, but again the reasons behind the outcry were generally rooted in affairs of state. Las Casas refuted it in attempt to protect Columbus’s successors and hinder Spanish progress in the Americas. Lopez de Gomara, in his *Historia general de las Indias* (1552), belittles the theory as well. His motivations, though, are found in his status as Hernan Cortès’s official historiographer and his desire to establish the latter as the conqueror and rightful leader of Mexico.⁶⁰ The Huguenot Urbain de Chauveton, in his translation of Benzoni, notes that if Oviedo’s theory were true, it would mean that Spain had dominated the New World for far too many years.⁶¹

In sum, the origins of New World natives, beyond posing theological problems to a fixed European world view, allowed various authors to develop theories dear to them: the Spanish drive to dominate, and British religious desires, for example.

The Controversy of French Origins

In Lescarbot’s text, Native roots are indivisible from France’s past. Indeed, his text joins two major debates of the time: that of American roots, and that of French origins. While the origins of the Amerindians were certainly a source of controversy at this time, the foundations of the French also elicited much study. In

⁵⁸ From de Fernandez Oviedo y Valdez, *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (Seville, 1535–37), cited in Gliozzi, *Adam et le Nouveau Monde*, p. 23. (my translation)

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

⁶¹ Chauveton, *Histoire nouvelle du Nouveau Monde ... extraite de l’Italien de M. Hierosme Benzoni Milanois ... et enrichie de plusieurs choses dignes de mémoire* (Geneva, 1579).

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the wish to find European rather than antique sources for French ancestry led to a conflict between the most common previously accepted version, that of the Trojan ancestors, and the newer *Gaulois* model.⁶² Colette Beaune notes the frame of the Trojan version, which would regain credit, for obvious political reasons, in the absolutist seventeenth century,

Francion and his companions leave Troy in flames to found the city of Sycambria. At the request of the emperor Valentine, who grants them a ten-year exemption from tribute taxes, they exterminate the *Alains*, hiding in the *Palus Méotides*. Ten years later, refusing to resume payment, they retire to Germany. Established on the Rhine, they penetrate into Gaul with Marcomir in the 4th century. This is the legend of the origin of the Franks: there is of yet no mention of the Gauls, who at this time were part of ancient history and not that of France.⁶³

In the mid-sixteenth century, however, the *Gaulois* origin, in various forms, became the most widely accepted version of French origins. The use of such a legend was originally to assert that rather than originating in either Troy or Germany, the French had always been in possession of their land. In addition, this interpretation of their foundations was used to grant the French certain qualities commonly given the *Gaulois*, such as courage, institutional independence, and strong resistance to invasion. Through Jean Le Maire de Belges in the fifteenth century, and such authors as Etienne Pasquier and François Hotman in the sixteenth, the *Gaulois* were established as the most historically viable ancestors of the French. The success of the *Gaulois* was such that by the end of the fifteenth century, “a Frenchman [had], certainly, *Gaulois* ancestors which he did not possess in 1400.”⁶⁴ A mark of this success is Honoré d’Urfé’s *Astrée* (1607), a story of pastoral love set in ancient Gaule, in which France’s ancestors are praised for “... la franchise, le sens de l’honneur, la pureté des moeurs ...” [... the frankness, sense of honor, and purity of morals ...] of which they are the earliest representatives and of which the modern French are the inheritors.⁶⁵ Whether they were used to demonstrate the beginnings of the French attachment to representative government such as

⁶² On visions of French origins, See George Huppert, *The Idea of Perfect History*; Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship* (both cited above, note 26); Colette Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris, 1993); R.E. Asher, *National Myths in Renaissance France* (Edinburgh, 1993). On the Gauls more specifically, see Corrado Vivanti, “*Les Recherches de la France* d’Etienne Pasquier: l’invention des *Gaulois*,” in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire, La Nation: I* (Paris, 1986) 226–56; Krzysztof Pomian, “*Francs et Gaulois*,” in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire, Les France: I* (Paris, 1992), pp. 83–99. The Trojan legend, according to Beaune, remained unchanged from the seventh until the mid-sixteenth century. From here, the *Gaulois* legend took precedence, although it had begun competing with the Trojan legend as early as the fifteenth century.

⁶³ Beaune, p. 25. (my translation)

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 45. (my translation)

⁶⁵ See Jean Lafond’s edition of *Astrée* (Paris, 1984), p. 11. (my translation)

in Hotman's *Franco-Gallia* (1574), or the pure origins of French institutions in Etienne Pasquier's *Les Recherches de France* (1560), the *Gaulois* were invoked to create continuity between "... l'ancienne Gaule et nostre nouvelle France" [... ancient Gaul and our new France].⁶⁶ Some authors, such as Hotman, made a clear link between the Franks and the Gauls, while others discuss the Gauls exclusively.⁶⁷ In either case, as Beaune notes, "Valiant soldiers, cultivated and pious, the Gauls have all of the requirements for acceptable ancestors, all the more so as they are well documented in texts as widely read as *De bello Gallico*."⁶⁸ Through the *Gaulois*, the French find a continuous link, on French soil, to their origins, for "the Gauls have been established in Gaul since time immemorial."⁶⁹ New France allows Lescarbot to take this one step further, linking "l'ancienne Gaule," old France, and New France.

The Amerindians, the Gauls, and the French: A Family Reunion

Lescarbot's Vision of Amerindian Origins

Lescarbot is an original and fascinating contributor to the European debate on native origins; his reasons for participating, however, move beyond cultural understanding into a very similar political realm to those of other European powers. His discussion of Amerindian origins is one that follows a clear logic, but which only becomes so at the end of his text. The treatment of origins is undertaken from the early chapters of his first book. He returns to the Noah legend, and proposes a novel hypothesis. He begins by noting the difficulty of the subject. No later than the third chapter of the first book of the *Histoire*, Lescarbot states,

Je sçay que plusieurs, étonnez de la decouverte des terres de ce monde nouveau que l'on appelle Indes Occidentales, on exercé leur esprit à rechercher le moyen, par lequel elles on peu être peuplées apres le Deluge: ce qui est d'autant plus difficile, que d'un pole à l'autre, ce monde là est separé de cetui-cy d'une mer si large...

[I know that various writers, astonished at the discovery of this new world called the West Indies, have racked their brains to discover the manner whereby it can have been peopled after the Deluge; which is the more difficult in that from one pole to the other, that hemisphere is separated from this by a sea so wide ...]⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Cited in Vivanti, "Les Recherches de la France d'Etienne Pasquier," p. 226. (my translation)

⁶⁷ A Frankish origin for the Gauls was often rejected in the sixteenth century as a result of anti-German sentiment. On this, Asher—see note 62 above—provides a very nice resumé of various myths and their political origins.

⁶⁸ Beaune, *Naissance*, p. 22. (my translation)

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 22. (my translation)

⁷⁰ Lescarbot, *History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 236, 43.

In an attempt to address this troublesome problem, writes Lescarbot, many Europeans “... se sont servi de quelques propheties & revelations de l’Ecriture sainte tirées par les cheveux” [... have made use of certain prophecies and revelations of Holy Scripture, dragged in by the hair...].⁷¹ He discusses, and appears to endorse as the most plausible circulating hypothesis, the Canaanite theory, according to which the Amerindians “... étoit une race de Cham portée là par punition de Dieu, lors que Josué commença d’entrer en la terre de Chanaan” [... were a race of Ham, carried thither by the punishment of God, when Joshua began his entry into the land of Canaan].⁷² For much of the chapter, it seems as if Lescarbot adheres to this, one of the most popular theories of Amerindian origins. However, he makes a novel move at the end of this discussion. After a lengthy treatment of the possibilities of the Canaanite view, he rather discreetly advances the following,

Mais quand je considere que les Sauvages ont de main en main par tradition de leurs peres, une obscure conoissance du Deluge, il me vient au devant une autre conjecture du peuplement des Indes Occidentales, qui n’a point encore esté mise en avant.

[But when I consider that by tradition from their forefathers the savages possess an obscure knowledge of the Flood, another conjecture occurs to me concerning the peopling of the West Indies, which has not yet been advanced.]

Developing his theory, Lescarbot continues, “... quel empêchement y a-il de croire que Noé ayant vécu trois cens cinquante ans après le Deluge, n’ait luy même eu le soin & pris la peine de peupler, ou plustot repeupler ces pais là?” [... what hinders us from believing that Noah during his life of 350 years after the flood, did not himself see to it, and take pains to people, or rather repopulate, these lands?].⁷³ The link between Noah’s son Japheth and the New World had already been made by Guillaume Postel in his *Cosmographicae disciplinae compendium* (1556), but Lescarbot goes even further.⁷⁴ Scholars have noted Lescarbot’s view that perhaps the patriarch himself, rather than his rejected son, peopled the New World.⁷⁵ However, in a European climate in which the debate on Amerindian origins “involved a few of the greatest minds in Europe,” it is important to ask *why* Lescarbot advances such a theory.⁷⁶ Where does this novel vision of Amerindian origins fit in his text? Where is Noah’s place in New France’s reparation of the woes of the present?

⁷¹ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 236, 43.

⁷² Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 236, 43.

⁷³ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 238, 45.

⁷⁴ Gliozzi, *Adam et le Nouveau Monde*, p. 32.

⁷⁵ “On the other hand, Lescarbot thought, Noah may have constructed a second Ark to bring settlers to America; he felt certain too that the ancients had visited the New World”; see Huddleston, *The Origins of the American Indians*, p. 113. He is following Gliozzi’s short remarks on the subject.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 10.

Noah and the Gauls

If Noah serves as the father of the Amerindians, what is his place in the French past? Lescarbot revisits the history of the first patriarch through the lineage of the *Gaulois*. Taking great care to mention in the title of Chapter III of book I that his subject includes “Noé Premier Gaullois,” Lescarbot explains that

pour le nom Gaullois, nous avons l'autorité de Xenophon, lequel en ses Aequivoques dict, que le premier Ogyges (qui fut Noé) fut surnommé Le Gaullois, pource qu'au Deluge du monde s'étant garantit des eaux, il en garantit aussi la race des hommes, & repeupla la terre.

[And for the word *Gaul* we have the authority of Xenophon, who in his *De Aequivocis* says that Ogygues the first (which is Noah) was surnamed the Gallic, because at the flood, having saved himself, he also saved the human race and repopled the earth.]⁷⁷

Thus, “Noé repeuplant le monde amena une troupe de familles pardeça” [Noah, when repopling the earth, led hitherward a group of families].⁷⁸ The family tree is constructed: Noah, patriarch of the Amerindian, is revealed as not only the biblical father of humanity but also specifically as the progenitor of the Gauls. The French and the Amerindians share a common ancestor. The implication here is that for Lescarbot, the French and the Amerindians are but one people. Presenting origins in this way is tantamount to stating that New France will be the site of a family reunion.

Completing the Return

This reunification is necessary, for, as we saw in depth above, modern France is ill, and has moved far away from past glory. Indeed, if the French drifted from certain values, it is because of a distancing from their origins. In the letter “A la France [To France],” Lescarbot notes that exploration and maritime voyages were the fare of every Franc/*Gaulois*. “Lors qu'ilz portoient le nom de Gaullois” [When they bore the name of Gauls], he notes, “... voz François n'étoient reputez legitimes si dés la naissance ilz ne sçavoient nager, & comme naturellement marcher sur les eaux. Ils ont avec grande puissance occupé l'Asie. Ils y ont planté leur nom, qui y est encore” [your Frenchmen were not considered true-born if from their birth they

⁷⁷ Lescarbot, *History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 231, 36. Xenophon never wrote such a text, and Lescarbot was working from forged fragments here. See translator's note on page 36 of the *Histoire*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 232, 37. The tradition of Noah as the first representative of the Gauls is most developed by Jean Lemaire de Belges, from whose fifteenth-century discussion Lescarbot borrows. See Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Les Illustrations de Gaule et Singularitez de Troye 1509* (Genève, 1969), pp. 17–23.

could not swim as though by nature walk upon the waters. They have with great power occupied Asia. There they have planted their name, which still endures].⁷⁹

It is important here that he discusses legitimacy, for this is the essential question he is asking: “how can we make New France a true reflection of ‘Frenchness’?” In an early chapter of the *Histoire*, Lescarbot discusses the maritime history of the Gauls, noting that if France wishes to redeem herself in the space of the New World, her surest path is an imitation of her lost forebears. Listing ancestral exploits, Lescarbot writes that

Ainsi ayans beaucoup multiplié (comme la nation Gaulloise est feconde) ilz se rendirent maitres de la mer dès les premiers siecles apres le Deluge... Au reste ils avoient leurs loix marines si bien ordonnées, que les nations étrangères se conforment volontiers à icelles, comme faisoient les Rhodiens, au recit de Strabon, léquels avoient emprunté de noz Marseillois les loix marines dont ils usoient.

[Thus having greatly multiplied (as the Gallic race is fruitful), they made themselves masters of the sea from the first centuries after the Deluge ... Moreover they had such good maritime laws that foreign nations willingly conformed themselves thereto, as, according to Strabo, did the Rhodians, who had borrowed from our people of Marseilles the maritime laws in use among them.]⁸⁰

However, Lescarbot writes, “... comme par la vicissitude des choses tout se change icy bas... les Gaullois ont quelquefois par occasion laissé refroidir cette ardeur de voguer sur les eaux” [... by the vicissitude of affairs, all things change here below... the Gauls have more than once let this zeal for ocean voyages grow cold for a time], and the modern French “... ont laissé derechef alentir cette ancienne ardeur de la navigation, qui ne s’est pas aysément r’échauffée depuis” [... again allowed this ancient ardour for navigation to burn low; nor has it since been easy to rekindle].⁸¹

The importance of finding the past is thus clear: the present nightmare, on both sides of the Atlantic, of French decadence and Amerindian savagery, can only be repaired through reuniting, in the moment, with lost siblings.

The Franco-American Gaulois

Lescarbot waits until the final book of the *Histoire* to complete the cultural marriage he undertakes in the beginning. This sixth book, which treats the Amerindians in depth, from birth until death, has been seen by many scholars as the most original and interesting of the work. He begins with a chapter “De la naissance” [On Birth] and ends with “Des Funérailles” [On Funerals], discussing in between such varied

⁷⁹ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 216, 12.

⁸⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 232–3, 37–8.

⁸¹ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 234, 39.

topics as “ornemens du corps” [bodily ornaments], “dances et chansons” [dances and songs], “exercices des homes” [manly exercises], or “la civilité” [civility]. Most commentators feel it is at this moment that Lescarbot’s voice emerges; in the context of the current discussion, it is here that Lescarbot reinforces the original link between the French and the Amerindians.⁸²

What makes the Indians worthy of attention is their similarity to the conception of “Frenchness” Lescarbot has created in the earlier sections of his work. He details the Indian mores through comparison. Among these people of “même parallèle et degré” [same parallel and degree], we find a relatively standard group of cultures: the *Romains*, *Hebreux*, *Allemands* [Germans], and the *Aegyptiens*.⁸³ By far the most common parallel made, however, is with the *Gaulois*. The Romans, the second-most mentioned people, are seen eight times in the book, while the Gauls, the direct ancestors of the French, are treated on more than fourteen occasions. The French are thus directly contrasted to the natives, contrasts which take on three functions: a window for the French on the virtuous and simple natives whose ways they should imitate, a reminder of what the French can bring to the natives, and a general justification for the implementation of an American New France.⁸⁴

Generally, critics have followed Corneilus Jaenen’s assessment, taken from earlier visions beginning with Gilbert Chinard, that Lescarbot “extend[s] the idealization of the noble savage to an idealization of the New World as a land of opportunity.”⁸⁵ This essentially positivist vision reduces to silence much of what is at stake in Lescarbot’s project. Since Lescarbot’s un-savage “sauvages” are, as we have seen, a textual creation, their nobility remains a reflection of the desired image of the self. The Amerindians, in Lescarbot, are a mytho-poetic foil, from which the French can learn. The positive aspects of their nature, through the textual moves discussed above, all stem from their essential *Gaulois* (and therefore French) nature inherited from Noah.

⁸² Following René Baudry’s appreciation of this as one of the most fully realized aspects of the *Histoire*, such scholars as Guy Poirier have noted that it is from this section of the text that we can ascertain a certain “discours lescarbotien [Lescarbotian discourse].” Guy Poirier, “Marc Lescarbot au pays des *Ithyphalles*,” *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 17.3 (1993): 73–93.

⁸³ See our Chapter 1 for a discussion of the confluence of climate and customs for early-modern Europeans.

⁸⁴ In a recent dissertation from McGill University, Isabelle Lachance argues strongly that Lescarbot’s treatment of the natives in this book is dual (savage and unsavage), due to his twin readership. The assimilationist tendencies would, therefore, be aimed at a learned elite, and the description of savagery would be a textual creation targeting a less sophisticated readership. My reservations with this vision are that it places Lescarbot’s discussion of any native “savagery” in the realm of rhetoric, thereby maintaining a traditional reading of the author as a learned, sensitive early ethnographer. “La Rhétorique des origines dans *l’Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* de Marc Lescarbot,” *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences* 66:1 (2005): 185 pp.

⁸⁵ Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, p. 34.

In the section “De la Guerre” [Of War], Lescarbot notes that “Nos anciens Gaullois ne faisaient pas moins de trophées que nos Sauvages des têtes de leurs ennemis” [Our ancient Gauls esteemed the heads of their enemies no less as trophies than do our savages].⁸⁶ Wartime prowess had in ancient times elicited the respect of Caesar for the Gauls, as seen in the *De bello Gallico*. Today, such prowess links the French to the American natives. In another section, Lescarbot invokes the separation between modern France and the one he has created. If contemporary France, as Lescarbot notes early in the text, is closed to the world, accomplishing “aucune chose de vertu” [nothing of virtue], this is not the case for their ancestors.⁸⁷ In a section entitled “Hospitalité des Sauvages, Gaullois, Allemans, & Turcs, à la honte des Chrétiens” [Hospitality of the Savages, Gauls, Germans, & Turks, to the shame of Christians], he notes that

Ils ont aussi l’Hospitalité propre vertu des anciens Gaullois (selon le témoignage de Parthenius en ses Erotiques, de Cesar, de Salvian, et autres) lesquels contraignoient les passans et étrangers d’entrer chés eux et y prendre refection: vertu qui semble s’estre conservée seulement en la Noblesse: car pour le reste nous la voyons fort enervée.

[They also have hospitality, special virtue of the ancient Gauls, according to the testimony of Parthenius, in his Erotics, of Caesar, Salvian, and others; for they constrained travellers and strangers to come into their houses, and there to make a meal; a virtue which only endures apparently only among the nobility and gentry; for among other classes we see it sick unto death.]⁸⁸

The practice of a Homeric *xenia*, or welcoming of others, places the Amerindians atop the French. This superiority, however, only comes in relation to a common ancestor.

Thus, the French could profit from contact with the natives in the essential areas of glory and hospitality. As we stated, however, this is a relationship of exchange, and beyond the “parole de Dieu” [word of God], which is the paramount gift the Europeans will bestow upon their brothers, the French will allow them first to realize their potential as humans and second, through the marrying of the two peoples, will allow them to be fertile and numerous.

The rhetoric of potential is widespread in this text, a telling example of which comes in the chapter on “La Tabagie,” or feasts. After a lengthy and positive discussion of native gatherings, Lescarbot moves to another, more Gallic subject: “c’est assez manger, parlons de boire” [But enough of food, let us speak of drink]. He laments, concerning the abundance of grapevines in the New World, “Je ne sçay si je doy mettre entre les plus graves aveuglemens des Indiens Occidentaux d’avoir abondamment le fruit le plus excellent que Dieu nous ait donné, & de n’en sçavoir

⁸⁶ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 3, pp. 469, 271.

⁸⁷ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 218, 15.

⁸⁸ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 396, 174.

l'usage" [I am not sure whether I should place among the greatest blindnesses of the West Indians that they have in abundance the most excellent fruit that God has given us, and yet know not the use thereof].⁸⁹ This fault, to be corrected by contact with the French, is lessened by the following sentence. Lescarbot's hesitation in reprimanding the Indians for lack of viniculture is justified, "Car je voy que nos anciens Gaullois en étoient de même ... & pensoient que le raisins fussent poison ..." [For I see that our Gaulish fathers were in the same state, ... and thought grapes to be poison ...].⁹⁰ Thus, the French have the mission of extracting their *Gaulois* brothers from the state of blindness in which they find themselves, as with wine from a grape.⁹¹

Finally, and this is essentially where Lescarbot brings the notions of origins and a single people together, he discusses fecundity. After all, is not the foundation of a discussion of lost family a desire to augment one's ranks? For, "... (comme dit le sage) *la gloire & dignité des Rois git en la multitude du peuple*" [... (to quote the Wise Man) 'in the multitude of people is the King's honor'].⁹² In the section "du Mariage" [Of Marriage], Lescarbot notes that the natives are lacking in population: "Voire j'ay oui dire plusieurs fois que pour rendre le devoir au mari elles se font souvent contraindre: ce qui est rare pardeça" [I have often been told that when a husband seeks his rights, the wife often compels him to use force; which is rare in these parts]. In contrast, "... les femes Gaulloises sont-elles célébrées par Strabon pour être bonnes portieres (j'entend fecondes) & nourrissieres" [For the women of Gaul are extolled by Strabo as being good carriers (I mean fruitful) and breeders]. In this instance, it is the French who most resemble the Gaullois, as, "... je ne voy point que ce peuple là abonde comme entre nous" [I do not see that population abounds there as with us]. Lescarbot attributes this not to Amerindian nature but, rather, to material conditions, implying that it is only an isolated aberration that the natives do not resemble the French and their common ancestors in reproductive prowess. He explains,

Vray est que noz Sauvages se tuent les uns les autres incessamment, & sont toujours en crainte de leurs ennemis, n'ayans ny villes murées, ni maisons fortes pour se garder e leurs embuches, qui est entre eux l'une des cause du default de multiplication.

[True it is that our savages kill one another without ceasing, and are always in fear of their enemies, having neither walled towns nor strong places to guard against their ambushes, which is one of the causes of their lack of increase.]⁹³

⁸⁹ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 397, 175.

⁹⁰ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 397, 175.

⁹¹ As we discuss more in depth in Chapter 1.

⁹² Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 234, 40.

⁹³ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 391, 165.

It is only through civilization, in the form of organized habitats, to be brought by the French, that the Amerindians will overcome this defect. Thus, the commerce of customs, mediated by a commonality of origins, creates a New France of infinite possibilities.

Returning to the Mirror

Rather than being a site for his *rêve exotique*, to cite Gilbert Chinard, Lescarbot's use of America is much more akin to Michel de Certeau's imaging of this land as a conceptual "blank slate" upon which one would "write European desires."⁹⁴ It is important to envision this writing of desire as a dual moment. As one looks at oneself in the mirror anew, alongside the newly created Amerindian brother, any aspect of both self and native that does not conform to the ideal has been laid to rest.

The movement of presenting European shortcomings to themselves through the eyes and voice of a supposedly "savage" outsider is most famously made by Montaigne in the essay "Of Cannibals." The essayist presents the notion of relativity of customs through a comparative analysis of seemingly barbarous practices such as anthropophagi, demonstrating to Europeans that out of context, any action can provoke ridicule and horror. What runs through the essay, beyond a criticism of European decadence or an elevation of a supposed "noble savage," is a fundamental critique of certainty.⁹⁵ One can never, says Montaigne, be sure, for we live in a world of vicissitudes, linked to the erosion and changes created by time, in which scepticism is the only rule to be followed. The world is in a state of *branle*, in which certainties constantly swing into uncertainties. *Movement*, as Jean Starobinski once noted, is the fundamental aspect of Montaigne's project. The possibility of judging another culture before examining the self is negated in Montaigne; he is criticizing the cultural superciliousness of the French. Essentially, his text is a representation of an Other in order to question the self. In short, he creates a critical native whose voice is able to present to the European all that they lack. In this way, Lescarbot is quite close to Montaigne.⁹⁶

Lescarbot differs from his predecessor in one primary area: in no way is he haunted by the problematic of doubt. Instead, Lescarbot's simultaneous presentation of native and European mores carries a clear ideal. Thus, the movement in Lescarbot is not one from the falsity of certainty to the certainty of uncertainty, as in Montaigne, but rather a voyage from a confusing and chaotic world to one

⁹⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988), introduction.

⁹⁵ See Catharine Randall, "Testimony, Translation, Text: Reading Reliably in Montaigne's 'Des cannibales,'" *Modern Language Studies* 25:2 (1995): 34–44.

⁹⁶ On Montaigne's presentation of self through the Other, see Michel de Certeau, "Montaigne's 'Of Cannibals': The Savage 'I,'" in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis, 1986); also see de Certeau, *The Writing of History*.

of possible stasis. This movement begins with a moment such as that between Lescarbot and Olmechin looking in the mirror. The *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* allows the reduction of chaos in two areas: the incommensurability of America, and the current state of the French. New France becomes, then, the site of a double *francisisation*, that of the New World native and that of its colonisers.

The result of Lescarbot's reading/writing of the Amerindians is the creation of a "mytho-poetic" present. In *Aspects du Mythe*, Eliade Mircea discusses myth as "explicative and foundational." It is, he notes, "... always the story of a creation," and it discusses "... things that are true. The proof is the world as it is."⁹⁷ This move is akin to what we are left with in Lescarbot. He has created a myth of origins in order to erase what is and replace it with a parallel reality. The world he describes is a fantastic poetic foundational moment, but one in which the "native" remains a step on the road to the creation of a true, full *Nouvelle-France*.

⁹⁷ Mircea Eliade, *Aspects du mythe* (Paris, 1995), p. 4.

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Chapter 4

La France Chrétienne ou la France commerçante?: Religion, Commerce, and Revised Identity

The Most Christian Nation?

The project of planting versions of France in America transformed long-held notions of what it meant to be French. We focus in this chapter on the ideas of Catholicism and mercantilism. Catholicism, traditionally a major part of the many articulations of French identity, and commerce, one of the principal motors of seventeenth-century empires, historically had been separate. Prior to the rise of its colonial empire, France had long sought to distinguish clearly the economic from the religious. Or rather, the economic aspects of French activity were never those placed at the forefront of conceptions of identity. Natalie Zemon Davis notes that at the time,

... if the businessman was to be considered as good a Christian as the peasant or landlord, it had to be shown that the buying, selling, and transporting of merchandise and the lending and investing of money could be carried on with impeccable motives.¹

Especially in the largely mercantile and emergent-capitalist seventeenth century, attempts at this separation created tensions. For example, as late as 1671, Louis XIV's advisors pondered changing the official rate of interest from his father's lowered figure of 5 5/9 per cent. Louis's reaction was to consult the doctors of the Sorbonne, the French authority on matters of theology. Why would the king seek the opinion of religious thinkers on an issue of financial importance? The ensuing discussion, littered with scriptural references and biblical admonitions, speaks not to the difficulties of deciding the interest rate, but, rather, of the problematic reconciliation of French identity and financial matters.² The dilemma of raising the prestige of the commercial and financial sectors was a battle fought throughout the century. The *noblesse de d'épée*, for example, traditionally barred from all things commercial, felt that "the *raison d'être* of the merchant was the acquisition of material wealth, his dominant motive personal gain. For his base and calculating virtues a fortune was ample recompense." Social *éclat*, in contrast, "... should

¹ Natalie Zemon Davis, "Sixteenth-Century French Arithmetics on the Business Life," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21.1 (1960): 18.

² Charles W. Cole, *Colbert and a Century of French Mercantilism: Volume I* (New York, 1939), p. 1.

be reserved for those who displayed valor or piety, and who devoted themselves without remuneration or distraction to serving the community on the battlefield or in the chancel.”³

In the New World, these two traditionally divided entities found themselves in close contact. How was this cohabitation assimilated? In a general sense, the texts of early New France, most of which were written by proponents of a missionary colony, refuse, or ignore, the place of commerce in the plantation of a New France. When economic gain is advocated, it is generally by an author stating that commerce can only be safe if used responsibly. In other words, the majority of texts from this period demonstrate a distrust of the place of commerce in the conception of a New France. In fact, we find in New France a rhetorical return to an earlier, purer form of Catholicism, one that places religion as the major facet of identity. In practice, however, religion was often secondary. The student of French colonial endeavors learns quickly that profit dominated proselytizing in the actions of the colonial protagonists. Various aspects of this problematic dissonance between word and action, and what this can teach us about conceptions of identity, are the subjects of this chapter.

We explore three facets of the relationship between religion and commerce in the New World. First, we will examine ways in which, rather than accepting the union between the church and money, early French writers painted New France as an opportunity to renew France’s position as “la nation la plus chrétienne” [the most Christian of nations], and internal positioning as to who was worthy of carrying that flame. From here, we will investigate attacks on merchants as less-than-French due to their commercial activities. However, within this second section, we will also examine various metropolitan authors, among whom Barthélemy de Laffemas and Antoine de Montchrétien (also written “Montchrestien”), who attempted to reconcile commerce and identity. Finally, in the third section, we will discuss the British relationship to commerce, one that is diametrically opposed to that of France in its unabashed acceptance of the perceived marvels of mercantilism.

First, early French authors in the New World, rather than looking forward towards a possible commercial Catholic nation, attempted a return to an earlier view of identity.⁴ France has long considered itself the most special of the church’s children. A fifteenth-century papal *nuncio* to the French king reiterates what was already commonplace: “... to you the most Christian of kings we entrust the common salvation, for by hereditary right you are the head of the Christian army, and it is to you that the other princes look up for the salvation of all.”⁵ According to general belief, France was God’s chosen country, and the French were His chosen people. In 1570, Du Haillan, in his *De l’estat et succez des affaires de France* [Of the State and Success of the Affairs of France], proclaims that

³ R.B. Grassby, “Social Status and Commercial Enterprise Under Louis XIV,” *The Economic History Review* 13.1 (1960): 19.

⁴ The New World was often seen as a site for renewal. See, for our example, our chapter on Lescarbot and the French/Amerindian past.

⁵ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (London, 1992), p. 94. Also see Colette Beaune’s *Naissance de la nation France* (Paris, 1993).

... le Roy de France est le plus excellent du monde et que par sur tous les autres Rois il est appelé Très Chrestien, et fils aîné de l'Eglise, qui est un tiltre qui fut acquis par Charlemagne, et laissé hereditaire à ses successeurs Rois de France, pour avoir vivement soustenu la foy, et religion Chrestienne, contre les infidelles, afin que par ce tiltre le plus excellent de tous, outre les autres grands et anciens preeminences, il precedast en tous lieux et rangs tous les autres Rois de la Chrestienté.

[... the King of France is the most excellent in the world and that over all other Kings he is called Very Christian, eldest son of the Church, which is a title acquired by Charlemagne, and inherited by all of his successor Kings of France, for having supported the Christian faith and religion, against the infidels, so that by this most excellent title of all, beyond all other great ones, he precedes in all places and ranks the other Kings of Christendom.]⁶

In relation to other nations, France holds a place of choice. This is reinforced through legends concerning the principal figure of the nation, the king. If all monarchs are to some extent sacred at the time, "... le roi de France l'est d'une manière encore plus accentuée, car à l'occasion de son sacre il est oint de l'huile contenue dans 'la sainte ampoule envoyée du ciel à saint Remi'" [... the king of France is so to a greater degree, because on the occasion of his coronation he is anointed with oil contained in 'the saintly vile sent from heaven to Saint Remy'].⁷ This conferred upon the king mythical healing powers, held by only three other monarchs.⁸ If an early-modern observer, especially from rival Spain or heretical England, still doubted the king's—and the kingdom's—superior status, they would only have to peruse the numerous texts which promote the general belief that "... being the king of France is the most dignified quality in Europe."⁹

Leah Greenfeld notes that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, during and following the Wars of Religion, a change occurred. France was pure because it had never known heresy, at least since the Cathars, who had been extinguished in around 1320.¹⁰ This vision of a crystalline past was untenable when faced with the discord of the Wars. For France's identity, "... its previously central

⁶ Cited in Myriam Yardeni, *La Conscience nationale en France pendant les guerres de religion (1559–1598)* (Paris, 1971), p. 20. (my translation)

⁷ Yardeni, *La Conscience nationale*, p. 18. (my translation)

⁸ Those of Spain, Jerusalem, and Sicily. It was implied in many of the texts that the French king was alone in having retained such holiness untainted.

⁹ Yardeni, *La Conscience nationale*, p. 20. (my translation)

¹⁰ The Cathars were a dualist religious group. Members "would not accept that an omnipotent and eternal God could have been responsible for the material world; for them, this world was the work of an evil creator." They had a continuous impact on religious life, especially in southern France and northern Italy, from approximately 1100 to the 1320s. During the Wars of Religion, the group was used by Protestants "seeking a provenance with which to counter the Catholic charge of innovation." See Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages* (New York, 2000), p. 1.

element had been taken out of it—and yet left undefined, for it was not clear what was to take its place.”¹¹ This led to a reevaluation of key notions. For example, as Myriam Yardeni notes, “... before the Wars of Religion, the sainthood of kings is an indisputable fact, no more than the existence of God,” but afterwards, “... we see a total reversal of this psychological paradigm.”¹² The breakdown of such structures led to troublesome difficulties for those in power. Notions of religious disunity would haunt French efforts at centralization throughout the century. Shortly before his death in 1715, Louis XIV decreed “... that those of his subjects who had once been Protestants would henceforth be considered members of the Roman Catholic Church.”¹³ Rather than signifying benevolence on the part of the monarch, this act demonstrates the fact that a semblance of religious cohesion was crucial to visions of identity at the time. This was true to the point that relative stability was attained on the condition that heresy remained hidden. As Norman Ravitch notes,

... at the time of [Louis’s] death in 1715, virtually everyone in France appeared to be conforming to the Catholic Church and its disciplinary requirements, as interpreted by the ‘Most Christian King’ in the kingdom which was styled ‘the Eldest Daughter of the Church.’¹⁴

Upholding the notion of “Most Christian” would also, in the absolutist seventeenth century, lead to troubles with questions of sovereignty. The Gallican church sought independence in relation to Rome, causing constant struggles for supremacy.¹⁵ As Ravitch reminds us, the major task for seventeenth-century kings concerning Rome, especially for Louis XIV, was to render the Church “... unable to harm or compromise royal authority, while the State enjoyed all the considerable advantages of its moral authority over the population as a whole.”¹⁶

Whose Souls are These?

In the context of this vision of France as *la plus chrétienne*, and our time period as placing a strain on such a notion, early New France poses a fascinating series of debates. The early colony was the site of several quarrels involving proponents of missionary colonization. The language and context of such debates, we argue,

¹¹ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p. 101. The author continues by developing this idea in relation to the sacrilization of the “state” and Divine Right Theory in the seventeenth century. For Greenfeld, it is the State which replaces the Church.

¹² Yardeni, *La Conscience nationale*, p. 17. (my translation)

¹³ Norman Ravitch, *The Catholic Church and the French Nation* (New York, 1990), p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁵ In the New World, as mentioned in Chapter 2, this struggle would prove delicate for the Jesuits, who eventually were forced to discontinue the publication of the *Relations* due to conflicting editorial allegiances at court and in Rome.

¹⁶ Ravitch, *The Catholic Church*, p. 2.

recall the notion of France as “la nation la plus chrétienne.” The ancient enemies, the Spanish and English, are still present; on this each author agrees.¹⁷ However, the more dangerous enemy is no longer the foreigner, but certain Frenchmen who are unworthy of transporting the purest of the Catholic nations to the New World. The foe of the “most Christian of nations,” with New World conversion, is within. The enemy takes two forms: first competing missionaries, and then, as we see in the second section of this chapter, merchant traders.¹⁸ Each religious group refrains from giving specific content to their superiority, relying rather on a rhetoric of celestial favoritism. “God has favored France,” imply these authors, “and by favoring my enterprise over those of my enemies, I am the guarantor of France’s superior Christianity.” Thus, when Lescarbot addresses his *patrie* as “Bel oeil de l’Univers, ancienne Nourrice des lettres et des armes, Recours des affligez, Ferme appui de la Religion Chretienne ...” [Fair eye of the universe, nurse from of old of Letters and of arms, resource of the afflicted, strong stay of the Christian Religion ...], it is in the context of a renewal of Frenchness.¹⁹ These authors propose a vision of identity infused with early Catholic notions, directly inspired by the unique space of America.

In 1608, Henri IV, through his confessor the Jesuit Father Coton, made a call to all of the Jesuit colleges in France for “... des prêtres de bonne volonté et remplis de dévouement, capables de mener à bien l’évangélisation et la conversion des indigènes de la nouvelle colonie française” [... priests of good will and filled with devotion, capable of carrying out the evangelization and conversion of the indigenous peoples of the new French colony].²⁰ Among those chosen was a professor of Hebrew and theology named Pierre Biard, who was discussed in our second chapter. Biard often asserts the essential Frenchness and superior Christianity

¹⁷ In a continuation of the “Black Legend,” Lescarbot denounces the Spanish misinterpretation of the Gospel in treating the natives with violence, in his epistle “A la France” [To France]: “... notre Sauveur a dit: ‘Apprenez de moy que je suis doux et humble de coeur. Item: venés à moy vous tous uqi estes travaillés et chargés, et je vous soulageray.’ Et non point: Je vous extermineray” [... our Saviour hath said: ‘Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart,’ and likewise, ‘come unto me all ye that labor and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest’; and not ‘I will root you out’]. Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France/Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (3 vols., Toronto, 1907), vol. 1, pp. 219, 17. Sagard describes the English as “ennemis de la foy” [enemies of the faith] in the *Dictionnaire de la langue huronne* (Paris, 1632), p. 12.

¹⁸ This could also be considered an “outside” foe, as many of the merchants of Dieppe and La Rochelle, for example, were Dutch.

¹⁹ Marc Lescarbot, “A la France,” *The History of New France*, vol. 1, p. 216, 12. Page numbers from Lescarbot refer first to the French original, then to the English translation.

²⁰ Marie-France Hilgar, “Tribulations d’un Grenoblois en Nouvelle-France” in Leiner Wolfgang (ed.), *Correspondances: Mélanges offerts à Roger Duchêne* (Tubingen, 1992), pp. 278–86. (my translation) It has been suggested that this call was in fact the result of Coton’s machinations. See Cornelius Jaenen, “Problems of Assimilation in New France,” *French Historical Studies* 4 (Spring 1966): 268.

of his fellows. Perhaps more than any of these authors, Biard stresses the likeness between New France and France. As he notes “Descouverte” [Discovered] by “nos François” [our French], New France is a “terre jumelle avec la nostre” [a twin land with our own].²¹ It is within the optic of this project of *rapprochement* that the episodes of superior Christianity Biard describes must be read.

The first of these moments comes in the early stages of his voyage, “Quand les marchands hérétiques nous virent à Dieppe, au jour fixé pour le départ, le 27 octobre de l’année dernière, 1610 ... ils imaginèrent un moyen qu’ils crurent favorable pour nous nuire” [When the heretic merchants saw us at Dieppe, on the appointed day, the 27th of October of last year, 1610 ... they thought up a means by which they meant to harm us ...].²² Protestant merchants refuse to allow the priest aboard their ship. With the help of influential friends, Biard is finally permitted to leave. As he notes, this is simply the will of God, and for the merchants “... je crois que le grand sujet de leur douleur, c’est précisément le triomphe du Seigneur Jésus; et fasse le ciel qu’il triomphe toujours! Ainsi soit-il!” [... I think the major subject of their pain is precisely the triumph of the Lord Jesus; may heaven triumph always!].²³

Another instance of superior Christianity comes in the context of a debate that would involve most writers of New France: Jesuit supremacy in the New World. At the time of Biard’s crossing, the Jesuits were not yet the sole missionary group in New France, but they had the support of the Queen Mother, as well as many other notable figures of the court.²⁴ Many felt as if it was only a matter of time before other groups were excluded from the colony. The Jesuits were thus attacked from all sides in the competition for American souls. Biard, in responding to a specific vein of these attacks—that the Jesuits were too slow in converting natives—poses his order as the sole group worthy of transplanting Christianity to a French colony.²⁵ Biard states that the Jesuits reserve their baptism, and transmission of Christian culture, as a special gift to be given only once subjects are ready, while the other missionaries deliver baptism as if it were a trifle. Before the Jesuits arrived, many

²¹ Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (73 vols., Cleveland, 1896–1901), vol. 1, pp. 34–5.

²² “Lettre du P. Pierre Biard, au T.R.P. Claude Aquaviva, Général de la Compagnie de Jésus, à Rome Dieppe, 21 janvier 1611,” in Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 3, pp. 132–3.

²³ Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 136–7.

²⁴ Marie de Medicis, mother of Louis XIII, and regent following the assassination of Henri IV.

²⁵ This was a lasting accusation. Indeed, Paul Lejeune, in his 1636 *Relation*, states that “Entre quelques propositions qu’on m’a fait de l’Ancienne France, quelqu’un me demande, d’où vient qu’en tant d’années on a baptisé si peu de personnes?” [Among various propositions that have been made to me from Old France some one asks me how it happens that in so many years so few persons have been baptized]. In Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 9, pp. 86–7. The Baron Lahontan, at the end of the century, famously rails the Jesuits for having converted only a few dying elders and sick children.

people were baptized, but “Qu’en advint-il? On se trouva subitement sur les bras, plustost une Synagogue de Samaritains, qu’un’Eglise de fidelles” [What happened then? They unexpectedly found on their hands a Synagogue of Samaritans rather than a Church of the faithful].²⁶ Instead, the Jesuits protect tradition, “... en gardant l’ancien usage de l’église de donner le Baptisme reservément, ayant premierement des Postulans & requerans, & puis des Chatechumenes, & à la parfin des Baptisés” [... by observing the ancient practice of the Church in giving Baptism cautiously, first having Postulants and Seekers, then Catechumens, and at last Baptism].²⁷ Thus, as a direct result of these quarrels, the Jesuits are returning to a purer, earlier form of baptism in order to transplant France in the New World, for, as Biard declares, “... c’est (amy Lecteur) l’ardent desir, & zeile de voir ceste nouvelle France, que je dy, conquise à nostre Seigneur: qui m’a fait prendre la plume en main ...” [Now (dear Reader) it is this my eagerness and ardent desire to see new France converted to our Lord, which has made me take my pen in hand ...].²⁸

The British invaded and claimed Quebec in 1629. In 1632, with the signature of the treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and the restitution of New France, the Society of Jesus became the dominant religious group in the colony, eclipsing for many years any other missionaries. Richelieu at first had decided to assign the Capuchins to the Canadian mission following the reclaiming of the colony, but was persuaded by influential friends of the Jesuits to allow them sole dominion over Canadian souls. They appeared to have a better chance of missionary success than other orders due to their superior resources, unequalled fervor, influence at court, and their skill in the area of propaganda.²⁹ This led to innumerable pages of jealous attacks from their enemies. This was not a new phenomenon, however, as Marc Lescarbot demonstrates. In defense of his benefactor Jean de Poutrincourt, long before the Jesuits were granted this monopoly, Lescarbot attacks the Order in the fifth book of the *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*.³⁰ The background of this quarrel begins with the resentment felt by Poutrincourt and others at the courtly manipulation that allowed the Jesuits first to enter New France. Indeed, when the transfer of the seigniorial rights to Port-Royal from de Monts to Poutrincourt came to Henri IV for ratification, the royal confessor father Coton persuaded the king to send Jesuit missionaries to New France. This was the beginning of difficulties for all other religious groups.³¹

Before Lescarbot attacks the Jesuits, however, he is careful to demonstrate the superior piety of his companions’ efforts in a chapter entitled “Remarques des faveurs de Dieu depuis l’entreprise de la Nouvelle-France” [Remarks concerning the favors of God for the project of New France]. While it may seem natural

²⁶ Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations*, vol. 4, pp.144, 155.

²⁷ Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 144–5.

²⁸ Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 35–7.

²⁹ See Cornelius Jaenen, “Problems,” p. 275.

³⁰ On Lescarbot’s religion, see note 46.

³¹ See Jaenen, “Problems,” p. 266.

that a missionary such as Biard pose New France in Catholic terms, Lescarbot is interesting because he is part of a primarily commercial mission, run, as many were, by Protestants.³² Since Lescarbot spends the majority of the first portion of his work railing past enterprises in New France, we can infer from this that he considers that the only true, worthy New France is the one being built at present. How does he frame this? Lescarbot declares that “... Dieu a montré en diverses occurrences qu’il veut favoriser cette entreprise” [God has shown in diverse happenings that he wishes to favour this enterprise].³³ Directly following this, he notes that Father Biard claims to have completed many miracles in New France, but that this is false. It is Poutrincourt’s men who in fact have been smiled upon by the heavens, which he proves by listing the miracles granted them. He describes the “... guérison de noz corps, léquels nous voyons souvent se r’avisier lors qu’ilz sont abandonnez des Medecins, & que l’esperance de santé en est du-tout perdue” [... healing of our bodies, which we often see revived after they have been given up by the doctors and after hope of recovery has been altogether lost].³⁴ Lescarbot makes an important distinction when he notes that an “... antipathie s’est rencontrée de mauvais augure dès le commencement entre les Jésuites et le François” [... and this antipathy has been found to be of ill augury from the commencement ... between the Jesuits and the French ...].³⁵ The Jesuits are somehow less than French. Indeed this is one of the complaints against them in a lawsuit that pitted Poutrincourt against Biard, to which we alluded previously. The transcript of Poutrincourt’s replies to accusations against him claiming that he was hindering conversion in the New World contains many of the ideas expressed by Lescarbot. In a list of reasons to fight the Jesuits, we find the fact that they “... mesprisent toute autorité Royale ...” [... shun all Royal authority], and that among other unholy practices they “... se mocquent des services et messes annuelles qu’on dit pour les deffuncts” [... disregard the services and annual masses for the dead].³⁶ Such problems, essentially stemming from questions of sovereignty, were one of the major sources of difficulties between France and papal authority in the seventeenth century. “The Eldest Daughter of the Church” understood the Jesuit problem in the context of Gallican independence from Rome.³⁷ The Society, through Lescarbot’s rhetorical process, is shown to be far from worthy of transplanting pure French Christianity in the New World.

³² It is clear from the commission to de Monts, however, that the religion of the State is the one to be spread in New France. We discuss the question of religious allegiance below.

³³ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 3, pp. 325, 44.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 326, 46.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp., 330, 53.

³⁶ *Factum du procez entre Messire Jean de Biencourt Chevalier sieur de Poutrincourt, Baron de S. Just, appellant d’une part, et Pierre Biard, Evemond Massé & consorts soy disans Prestres de la Societé de Jesus, intimez*, 1613 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, BN 4-FM-2965), p. 44. (my translation)

³⁷ On this question, see Ravitch, *The Catholic Church*.

Gabriel Sagard's *Grand voyage du pays des Hurons* (1632) finds its *raison d'être* in the quarrel between the Franciscan Recollect order—a branch of the Franciscan Friars Minor—and the Jesuits. In 1617, the Recollects were given permission by Pope Paul V to develop a plan agreed upon with Champlain and Louis Houel, a rich Protestant merchant, to entrust the souls of the Amerindians to the order. This plan had earlier been agreed to by the Prince de Condé in 1614. The Recollects, however, soon realized that the task they had undertaken was too costly for their impoverished group. In fact, they even went as far as to ask for the help of the wealthier Jesuits in 1624. A feud soon began to erupt, as the Recollects were certain that the Jesuits wished to chase them from the colony. The English conquest of Quebec in 1629 delayed the materialization of Recollect fears concerning their rivals. Ultimately, however, the Recollects were not allowed to return to the colony upon the restitution of Quebec to the French in 1632. As mentioned above, the Jesuits had a virtual monopoly on conversion from this time on. It is due to this perceived outrage that Sagard, who had spent a little more than a year in Huron country between 1623 and 1624, was asked to detail the work of the Recollects in the colony. Of the examples of superior piety from Sagard's text, some of the most striking are of miraculous occurrences. On one occasion, the Hurons wish to build fine cabins for the missionaries, but weather does not permit it. They ask the missionaries to end the rains which had been "... fort grandes et importunes ..." [very heavy and inconvenient], by "... priant ce grand Dieu que nous appelions Père" [... praying to that great God whom we called Father ...].³⁸ Sagard then recounts that, "Dieu, favorisant nos prières (après avoir passé la nuit suivante à le solliciter de ses promesses), nous exauça et les fit cesser si parfaitement que nous eûmes un temps fort serein ..." [... God looked with favour on our prayers, after we had spent the following night in petitioning Him for His promises, and heard us and caused the rain to cease so completely that we had perfectly fine weather ...].³⁹ Moreover, once the natives are finished with the cabin, "... les pluies recommencèrent, de sorte qu'ils publièrent partout la grandeur de notre Dieu" [... the rain began again, so that they proclaimed everywhere the greatness of our God].⁴⁰ On another day, the Amerindians are afraid to take to the water due to the winds. Sagard, who notes that "... il me semble que j'avais la foi au double que je n'en ai pas ici!" [I think I had twice the faith I had here!], instructs them not to worry.⁴¹ He orders them to the water "... car en peu de temps les vents cesseront et la mer calmera" [... because in a short time the wind will drop and the

³⁸ Gabriel Sagard, *Sagard's Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons/Le Grand voyage au pays des Hurons*, trans. and ed. George M. Wrong (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1939), pp. 313, 78. Page numbers refer first to the French, then to English translation.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 313, 78.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 313, 78.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 397, 191. It is also interesting here that New France is the site of this superior Christianity, implying that France is somehow decadent and in need of a place for the renewal of its faith. The decadence of the mother country as a justification for colonial emigration is a repeated motif in this literature. This is explored in depth in our chapter on Lescarbot and the Amerindians.

sea become calm].⁴² Miraculously, “A peine les canots furent-ils en mer, que les vents cessèrent et la mer calmit comme un plancher ...” [The canoes had hardly been launched when the wind fell and the sea became smooth as a floor ...].⁴³ Why confide the saving of souls to any other than the order that obviously has God’s ear? Perplexed by this question, Sagard decries official policy which according to him ignores the fact that only his brethren can honor the “... cent mille âmes à gagner à Jésus-Christ” [... one hundred thousand souls to be won for Jesus Christ] and for France.⁴⁴

New France altered and renewed visions of Frenchness. Through these discussions, America becomes a site for the interpretation of what France is and is not. These orders vying for control of France’s missionary future are in fact competing over which vision of “la nation la plus chrétienne” would travel to New France, pointedly ignoring the commercial nature of the colony.

Religion Versus Commerce

The shunning of commercial enterprise in the return to a purified Christianity, however, leads to numerous difficulties. The colonial projects of European powers were largely based on the hope for economic gain, and France is no exception.⁴⁵ As noted above, France traditionally insulated the religious from the economic. New France, as a propitious terrain for Christian colonization as well as mercantile interests, raised this debate with particular fervor.

We should preface this section of our discussion with a note concerning the distinction between the professed religion of some of our authors and the religiosity outlined in their texts. Laffemas, Montchrétien, Lescarbot, and Champlain all had Protestant ties. Laffemas was a Huguenot tailor and close advisor to Henri IV. Montchrétien, as discussed below, is less clear in his religious leanings. Champlain is a native of the major Huguenot salt-producing city of Brouage, and almost certainly began his life as a Protestant. Lescarbot’s companions le Sieur de Monts and the Baron de Poutrincourt were both important Huguenot figures with distinguished service to that cause during the Wars of Religion. Lescarbot’s religion has never been ascertained with certainty.⁴⁶ Having noted this, none of

⁴² Ibid., pp. 313, 78.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 313, 78.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 391, 242.

⁴⁵ See Marcel Trudel’s *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France* (5 vols, Montreal, 1963), vols 1 and 2; also see the excellent introduction to the 1990 edition of Sagard’s *Grand Voyage* by Réal Ouellet and Jack Warwick (Quebec, 1990).

⁴⁶ In *Une lettre inédite de Lescarbot, publiée avec une notice biographique sur l’auteur* (Paris, 1885), Gabriel Marcel suggests that Lescarbot may be Protestant. In a recent book on Lescarbot, however, Eric Thierry convincingly refutes this idea, describing Lescarbot as a frustrated member of the Catholic *Ligue*. See Eric Thierry, *Marc Lescarbot: Un homme de plume au service de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris, 2001). In any case, Lescarbot’s colonial

the aforementioned authors, save Laffemas, is overtly Protestant in their texts. On the contrary, each of them uses a decidedly Catholic rhetoric, praising the official religion of France as the only viable cult and never questioning the tenets of Roman Catholicism. Thus, the religion referred to in the following pages can almost without exception be assumed to be that of the French king.⁴⁷

As we stated earlier, Christianity and its historically negative Other, commerce, were confronted with each other in America. If France was to recreate itself in the New World, what face was this new entity to assume? Was France a Christian nation with a healthy distrust of capital, a modern mercantile state, or was it possible to reconcile both?

In his Third *Voyage*, Samuel de Champlain complains that while he and his companions had "... toute la peine & aventure, les autres qui ne se soucient d'aucunes descouvertes ..." [... all the trouble and risk, others who did not worry about discoveries ...], capture "... la proie, qui est la seule cause qui les meut, sans rien employer ny hasarder" [... the profit, which is the only motive that moves them, since they invest nothing and risk nothing].⁴⁸ Marc Lescarbot, in the first book of the *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, also complains that the glory of New France "... seroit l'oeuvre aujourdhui bien avancé, si l'envie & l'avarice de certaines gens qui ne donneront point un coup d'épée pour vôtre service, ne l'eût empêché" [... would be well advanced today if the envy and avarice of certain folk who will not strike a blow in your service had not hindered it].⁴⁹ Their enemies are the merchants, who, in Champlain's words have shown themselves to be "mauvais naturels" [naturally bad] and "contre les choses vertueuses" [against virtuous things].⁵⁰ In fact, the merchant traders were perhaps the largest, though most transient, group in the New World. In the early years of the colony, a debate raged between proponents of missionary colonization and merchants whose perceived interests were solely financial. The written record of this debate is essentially contained in the writings of early colonists such as Lescarbot and Champlain.⁵¹

project calls for religious unity, which at this time meant rallying to the state religion, for "Comme la Religion est le plus solide fondement d'un Etat, contenant en soy la Justice, et consequemment toutes les vertus, aussi fait-il bien prendre garde qu'elle soit uniforme s'il est possible, et n'y ait point de varieté en ce qu chacun doit croire soit de Dieu, soit de ce qu'il a ordonné" [As Religion is the most solid foundation for a State, including within itself justice, and consequently all the virtues, so we should take all possible care to preserve its uniformity, that there may be no variety in the beliefs concerning either God or the things which He has ordained]. Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 324, 194.

⁴⁷ Richelieu excluded the Huguenots from New France in 1627. See Jaenen, "Problems," pp. 272–3.

⁴⁸ Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain/Oeuvres* (6 vols, Toronto, 1922–35), vol. 2, p. 192. French and English are printed on the same pages in this edition.

⁴⁹ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 212, 215.

⁵⁰ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 2, p. 218.

⁵¹ Merchants had little time to record their sentiments concerning the problematic colonists. In addition, we must remember that traders and merchants, from very early in

In order to restore a voice to their rivals, we will read Lescarbot and Champlain alongside two very influential metropolitan texts of mercantilist theory. Although these authors cannot be said to convey exactly the concerns of those Lescarbot and Champlain dispute, their works were certainly influential on French official policy in this area. Barthélemy de Laffemas, *Contrôleur Général des Finances* under Henri IV and author of several economic treatises and pamphlets, and Antoine de Montchrétien, author of the *Traité de l'Oeconomie Politique* (1615) both shaped the economic trends of their time. Montchrétien in particular, in his text of early mercantilist theory, outlined notions from which Richelieu borrowed heavily, and which eventually would become codified by Colbert. In addition, the ideas of these authors were already circulating at the time of the composition of their works.⁵² In essence, the dispute between missionary colonists and mercantilists is one based on the following question: who should be transplanting France in the New World?

What were the crimes committed by these merchants? Lescarbot, in a chapter of the *Histoire* entitled “Plainte sur nôtre inconstance & lacheté” [Complaint on our inconstancy and cowardice], describes merchant avarice as one of the major hindrances to the future of the colony. He recounts an episode concerning Jacques Cartier’s nephews, who wished to rekindle French colonial efforts at the end of the sixteenth century. Once these virtuous young men, through all the proper channels, had obtained the commission necessary for their venture, “... voici l’envie des marchands de Saint-Malo qui prend les armes pour ruiner tout ce qu’ils avaient fait, & empêcher l’avancement & du Christianisme & du nom François en ces terres-là” [... see the jealousy of the merchants of Saint-Malo, who took up arms to ruin all that they had done, and to hinder the advancement alike of Christianity and of the French name in those lands].⁵³ The goal of this French colony, according to Lescarbot, is precisely the amplification of the French name. The merchants are able to have the commission revoked, and once again France has fallen short of her colonial possibilities. This early example of a difficulty Lescarbot cites throughout his text, in fact the same problem that cut short his own voyage, leads him to conclude the following:

On dit qu’il ne faut point empêcher la liberté naturellement acquise à toute personne de traffiquer avec les peuples de delà. Mais je demanderoiy volontiers qui est plus à preferer ou la Religion Chrétienne, & l’amplification du nom François, ou le profit particulier d’un marchand qui ne fait rien pour le service de Dieu, ni du Roy?

[It is said that no hindrance must be placed upon the liberty to trade with these tribes across the water, which is the natural right of every man. But I should like

France’s colonial enterprise, were the horse upon which missionaries and explorers rode in, so to speak. See James Axtell, *The Invasion Within* (New York, 1985), introduction.

⁵² On the influence of and influences on these authors, Cole and Magnusson (see notes 2, 60). On Montchrétien more specifically, see the excellent introduction to the 1999 edition of the *Traité* by François Billacois.

⁵³ Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 2, pp. 480–81, 191.

indeed to ask which is more to be preferred, the Christian religion and the spread of the French name or the private gain of a merchant who does nothing for the service of God or of the King?]⁵⁴

The factions are clear: France and Christianity versus “cette belle dame Liberté” [fair lady, Liberty].⁵⁵

Champlain describes a similar incident, stemming from his principal worry that merchants will profit from his discoveries. He is outraged that anyone would “... jouir du fruit de nos labeurs” [... enjoy equally with us the fruits of our labors].⁵⁶ This fear is realized when, citing the precedence of their compatriot Jacques Cartier, a group of merchants from St. Malo appeals to the king for trading rights in New France. Champlain cites several reasons for the necessity of refusing this, among them that he and his benefactor de Monts have done the work that the merchants were afraid to perform, and that New France would be a desolate outpost without them. More importantly, however, he hopes that the king will see reason, and that

Dieu luy fera la grace un jour de faire tant pour le service de Dieu; de sa grandeur & bien de ses subjects, que d’amener plusieurs pauvres peuples à la cognoissance de nostre Foy, pour jouir un jour du Royaume celeste.

[I hope that some day, for the service of God, for his own glory, and for the good of his subjects, His Majesty may by God’s grace succeed in bringing many poor tribes to the knowledge of our faith, in order that later on they may enjoy the heavenly kingdom.]⁵⁷

To found a colony worthy of France, one must have “de l’honneur, & de la gloire” [honor and glory], whereas the merchants are “poussez d’une pure malice” [driven by pure malice] and self interest.⁵⁸

The Mercantile Voice

A reading of Lescarbot and Champlain alongside Laffemas and Montchrétien shows the debate as one that touches upon fundamental questions of identity. Jerah Johnson notes that French mercantilist theory “differed significantly from

⁵⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 481, 191–2.

⁵⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 481, 192. In the letter to the king prefacing the first book of the *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, Lescarbot poses the problem of New France in commercial terms, when he discusses “les tresors à esperer de vôtre NOUVELLE-FRANCE” [the treasures to be hoped for from your New France], but he does so within a rhetoric of distinction between the careful, Christian merchant, whose main goal is conversion, and the avaricious one. See Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, vol. 1, pp. 213, 7.

⁵⁶ Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, vol. 2, p. 218.

⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 221.

⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 216.

other national mercantile ideologies and practices.”⁵⁹ While the writers of English mercantilism were “particularist and practical, [and] focused largely on specifics such as trade regulations and the accumulation of savings that would ensure profits to individuals and private companies”—what Lars Magnusson terms a “science of trade”—the French tended to be philosophical in outlook.⁶⁰ In fact, French mercantilism was as much a vision of the future of the nation as the colonial projects of Lescarbot or Champlain. Indeed, mercantilism, in its most generally accepted definition, that of “economic nationalism” is as concerned with conceptions of the nation as with trade.⁶¹

Barthélemy de Laffemas, the second most important economic figure under Henri IV after Sully, linked nascent mercantilist ideas with the future of the nation. In 1602 he was appointed *Contrôleur général du Commerce* and President of the *Conseil du Commerce*. According to Charles Cole, “to Laffemas, his native land is the supreme object of devotion. He groans at her defeats, glories in her triumphs, and worries over her difficulties.”⁶² Moreover, colonial endeavors are very much a facet of his economic plans. An occasional poet, Laffemas reminds France that she refused Columbus once, “L’on reconnoist le mal des Conseillers de France/ Du mespris de Collon des Indes l’inventeur” [We now recognize the mistake of the Counselors of France/ For their shunning of Colon, inventor of the Indies], and has regretted it since.⁶³ The kingdom should not repeat such errors.

Furthermore, if anyone, such as Lescarbot, should doubt the link between international commerce and the future of France, they need only heed Laffemas,

Vous tous qui mesprisez les effets du Commerce
Songez à voz enfants qu’il leur peult advenir.
Les riches en tout temps un chacun doit mourir
Craignez que tous voz biens n’aillent à la renverse.
[You who look down upon the effects of Commerce
Think of your children and of what can happen to them.
All rich people must die at some time
Fear that your wealth be lost.]⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Jerah Johnson, “Colonial New Orleans: A Fragment of the Eighteenth-Century French Ethos” in Arnold R. Hirsch and Joseph Logsdon (eds), *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization* (Baton Rouge, 1992), p. 16.

⁶⁰ Johnson, “Colonial New Orleans,” p. 16; Lars Magnusson, *Mercantilism: The Shaping of an Economic Language* (London, 1994), p. 174.

⁶¹ Lars Magnusson would disagree with his general notion of a “science of trade.”

⁶² Charles W. Cole, *French Mercantilist Doctrines Before Colbert* (New York, 1931), p. 66.

⁶³ Barthélémy Laffemas, *Le sixième traité du commerce* (Paris, 1600), Title page. (my translation)

⁶⁴ Laffemas, *Le Quatriesme Advertissement* (Paris, 1601), p.15. (my translation)

If, for Lescarbot and Champlain, to ignore the importance of responsible colonization is to ignore the future glory of France, Laffemas considers the same crime being committed when commerce is spurned.

Laffemas's writings are scattered throughout a number of *Avertissements* and *Traités*. A more unified look at the union between nation and commerce comes in Antoine de Montchrétien's *Traicté de l'Oeconomie Politique* (1615), presented as a "... plan de redressement de la France (et pas seulement de son économie)" [... a plan for the reestablishment of France (and not only of its economy)].⁶⁵ Montchrétien's religious leanings are much less clear than those of Laffemas. We cannot say with certainty whether Montchrétien was Protestant or Catholic in 1615. Did he convert while in forced exile in England? He was involved in manufacturing, participated in Protestant armed revolts, and was put to death in 1621 for suspected heresy and treason. His religiosity in the *Traité*, however, appears ultimately quite Catholic. Catholic institutions, their rights and material possessions, are never contested. The author even goes as far as to call the king, "fils aîné de l'Eglise" [eldest son of the Church].⁶⁶ Perhaps this has to do with the audience of the text, for it is explicitly directed to the king, but Montchrétien never questions the Catholic Church's place as the religious arm of France. It has been said that Montchrétien's text first and foremost comes from a desire to "... persuader son roi que l'action économique n'est pas indigne de sa gloire" [... persuade his king that economic action is not unworthy of his glory].⁶⁷ Montchrétien adds to and condenses many of the ideas put forth by Laffemas as well as those of other thinkers such as Jean Bodin. What is remarkable about Montchrétien in relation to New France is the scope of his project for the colonial future of the nation. Paolo Carile, one of the first to examine links between Montchrétien and New France, characterizes the author's discussion as "... un modello utopico della Nouvelle-France" [... a utopian model of New France].⁶⁸ Seventeenth-century colonies certainly had a major place as outlets and inlets for the metropolis, especially under Colbert, but Montchrétien moves beyond the purely economic role of the colony. Indeed, he says in the section *de la navigation* of his text that the conversion of the New World natives to French Christianity is a worthy project,

... c'est pourquoy l'on doit esperer de voir quelque jour fleurir entr'eux la pieté, la foy, la justice et toutes autres sortes de vertus, ausquelles ils peuvent estre nourris et accoutumez par doctrine et par imitation, amoureux et admirateurs qu'ils sont de nos meurs et façons de faire.

⁶⁵ Antoine de Montchrétien, *Traicté de l'Oeconomie Politique*, ed. François Billacois (Geneva, 1999), p. 7. (my translation)

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 19. (my translation)

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 32. (my translation)

⁶⁸ Paolo Carile, *Lo sguardo impedito: studi sulle relazioni di viaggio in "Nouvelle-France" e sulla letteratura poplare* (Fasano, 1987), p. 321. (my translation)

[... which is why we must hope to see grow among them piety, faith, justice, and all sorts of other virtues, to which they can be nourished and accustomed by doctrine and imitation, so much do they love our customs and habits.]⁶⁹

Montchrétien clarifies his intentions when he notes that

Vous avez, Sire, deux grands chemins ouverts à l'acquisition de la gloire: l'un qui vous porte directement contre les Turcs et mécreans, desquels la force s'affoiblit de jour en jour ... et l'autre qui s'ouvre largement aux peuples qu'il vous plaira envoyer dans ce nouveau monde, où vous pouvez planter et provigner de nouvelles Frances.

[You have, Sire, two major paths open to the acquisition of glory: one that will take you against the Turks and miscreants, whose strength diminishes daily ... and another which opens widely to the people you wish to send to this New World, where you can plant and spread New Frances.]⁷⁰

“Planter et provigner de nouvelles Frances,” was a project shared by both Champlain and Lescarbot and their enemies. We must remember here the definition by David Spurr mentioned in our chapter on wine. *Colony* is linked etymologically to *culture*, meaning both tilling the soil and education.⁷¹ For France, whether in mercantile or in Christian-colonial terms, the colonist was first and foremost a cultivator, both of the lands he occupied and of the French name. Which seeds this cultivator should plant, however, and who was to do the planting were sources of great conflict.

There were several other authors of the time whose writings treat the attempted fusion between commerce and a prestigious image of the nation. Among these, perhaps the most original is the monk Jean Eon's *Le Commerce Honorable*, in which the author invokes “the imagery and philosophy of pagan Antiquity, the wishes of the Almighty and the historical examples of primitive Israel and contemporary Europe” in order to demonstrate that “trade was not the preserve of grasping and petty usurers, but the source of social stability, national prosperity, political power, and civilized life.”⁷² Other authors include the priest Marchetti in Marseilles, Du Noyer—mentioned in our introduction—, and Jacques Savary,

⁶⁹ Monthchrétien, *Traicté*, p. 322. (my translation)

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 315. (my translation)

⁷¹ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (Durham, 1993). It is also important to note here—although peripheral to our argument—that the actual practice of early commerce in the New World was one of violence, aggression, and misunderstanding “because common agreement on the nature of the exchange itself developed only gradually”; see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 78.

⁷² Grassby, “Social Status,” pp. 21–2.

who penned the highly influential *Parfait Négociant*.⁷³ Although New France by no means brought closure to such debates, the issues raised by these questions of religion and commerce led to illuminating discussions of Frenchness.

European Context

What were the relationships between other European nations and the commercial nature of empire? Did the commercial and the religious clash in the cases of France's rivals? In the ensuing portion of this chapter, we will attempt a partial answer to this question in relation to the British. As we touched upon in Chapter 2, the British enjoyed a very different relationship to commerce than did the French. Jerah Johnson notes that the British endeavors were almost principally, and unabashedly, linked to commerce.⁷⁴ Gary Nash takes this further when he states that the British did not hesitate to use "military force or guile to wrest land and political submission from their Indian neighbors," all working towards the goal of commercial exploitation of the colony.⁷⁵ R.B. Grassby remarks that in early-modern England, despite literary ridicule of commercial men, one "could not permanently impair the prestige of the successful merchant."⁷⁶ Recent appraisals have confirmed the close ties between empire and commerce in the British Americas, and even the French were quite envious of the success of British trading companies.⁷⁷

Does this mean that the British completely neglected religious aspects in the New World? The answer, of course, is no. The religious origins of the American colonies, especially Virginia, are well known, even romanticized. What is interesting, however, is the complete lack of separation between the two elements in British writings of empire. While the French, as discussed above, divided themselves along the lines of religion and commerce, this was far from the case in the seventeenth-century British Empire. In fact, these lines were practically non-existent for the English. For example, arguably the greatest memorialist of English overseas endeavors, Richard Hakluyt the younger, held the impressive religious titles of "rector of Wetheringsett in Norfolk, prebendary of Bristol Cathedral and

⁷³ Ibid., p. 23. Eon's text, although we would have liked to have consulted it, was unavailable at the Bibliothèque Nationale at the time of this chapter's composition. Savary, one of the century's most famous pamphleteers, was in Colbert's service and is thus a bit beyond the time period we are discussing here.

⁷⁴ See Johnson, "Colonial New Orleans," p. 16.

⁷⁵ Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North America* (Englewood Cliffs, 1974), p. 105. It should be noted here that the French generally did not use military force against the Indians simply because they were quite dependant upon them for trade, and they were greatly outnumbered by the natives.

⁷⁶ Grassby, "Social Status," p. 19.

⁷⁷ See, for example, David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000).

archdeacon of Westminster Abbey.”⁷⁸ However, as David Armitage notes, “The most direct institutional source of his commitments was not the Elizabethan Church but rather the Clothworker’s Company.”⁷⁹ In time, Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* were carried on board ships of the East India Company.⁸⁰ In short, he did not need to justify his involvement in the commercial. Hakluyt is only the most famous example of this, however, and there were many English clerics who entered the discussion concerning America. For example, George Benson, Patrick Copland, Richard Crakanthorpe, William Crashaw, John Donne, Robert Gray, and William Symonds “all wrote on behalf of the Virginia Company, and deployed sermons as one of the major genres of promotional literature for the company.”⁸¹ The preceding citations speak to the complete lack of separation between the religious and the commercial in the principal British conceptions of empire. However, it appears logical that the two would go together in the writings of clergymen. Was this the case for secular writers? Edward Bland discusses the “advancement of God’s glory” alongside the need to “consider the present benefit and future profits” to be gained from the New World.⁸² Thomas Harriot places his *Briefe and true report* as working “in the Lord,” and directly proceeds to discuss America’s “Merchantable commodities.”⁸³ At times, in even the most important instances, religion is completely absent from discussions of the New World. For example, Queen Elizabeth’s letters patent to Sir Walter Raleigh (1584) make no mention of religion.⁸⁴ In essence, then, the British treated commerce in the New World as a fundamentally positive endeavor. Certain French authors, who had reservations about commerce, as noted above, did admit that it had a place in the New World. However, there is always a rhetoric of “only if in the right hands” attached to such mentions. The British, however, embraced the commercial aspects of empire in a general, universal sense, positioning religion in fact as united with, if not subject to, mercantile gain.⁸⁵

In relation to a New France, there are interesting links between commercial and religious elements and the establishment of a “New England.” Modern

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 64.

⁸² Edward Bland, *The Discovery of New Brittain* (London, 1651), “To the reader.”

⁸³ Reprinted in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1600), ed. Ernest Rhys (7 vols., London, 1907), vol. 6, pp. 165, 168.

⁸⁴ Reprinted in Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations*, vol. 6, p. 115.

⁸⁵ Of course, Protestantism, has traditionally followed a logic of “help yourself, and He will help you,” encapsulated in “the Calvinist ethic according to Max Weber: an active man in the world, upright and hardworking, convinced that God blesses the well-managed enterprise”; see François Billacois’s introduction to the 1999 edition of Montchrétien’s *Traicté*, p. 20. (my translation)

evaluations, although there are few on the subject, are divided. Armitage suggests that for most English, the conception of a British empire was a late phenomenon, citing J.R. Seeley's famous declaration to a Cambridge audience in 1881 that "we seem, as it were to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind."⁸⁶ Thus, the colonies were not seen as an implantation of Britain in America. Jerah Johnson, however, follows Louis Hartz's assessment in *The Founding of New Societies* that a colonial society is

a cross section, of the mother country's society cut out of the continuum of its history at a particular point and transplanted overseas, where it grew to maturity, replicating many of the social and attitudinal patterns characteristic of the mother country at the time of the excision.⁸⁷

According to Johnson, then, New England is certainly what the name implies. Without following Hartz's somewhat static view to the letter, accounts from the period tend to confirm Johnson's assessment, without making it absolutely clear what the British meant by a "New Britaine." Anthony Pagden outlines the legal implications of colonial entities in *Lords of All the World*, but his interests emanate from more official discussions of colonies than we discuss here. In *Purchas His Pilgrimage. Or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places Discovered, from the Creation to the Present* (London, 1613), Samuel Purchas hails the Virginia Settlement as a 'New Britaine' and as part of a 'New Britanian Common-wealth.'⁸⁸ Robert Bland refers to "the happy country of New Brittain" which is "of more temperate clymate then that the English now inhabite."⁸⁹ Roger Williams, as we noted in Chapter 2, goes as far as to call inhabitants of the colony "New-English," an unheard-of phenomenon even in New France. It is not our project here to discuss the nature of a New England. One should note, however, that the exploration undertaken in this book, as the previous citations imply, could quite possibly be carried out in relation to other colonial empires.

To return to New France, the link between religion and identity was called into question in the commercial enterprise of colonialism. This final chapter demonstrates one of the principal ways in which America stood as a site for reevaluation and discord concerning what it meant to be French in the early seventeenth century.

⁸⁶ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins*, p. 16.

⁸⁷ Johnson, "Colonial New Orleans," p. 12.

⁸⁸ Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage. Or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in All Ages and Places Discovered, from the Creation to the Present* (London, 1613), pp. 625, 631, 632.

⁸⁹ Bland, "To the reader." Bland is discussing the region below the James River, and thus a separate entity from the Virginia colony.

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Conclusion

Gabriel Sagard, as we noted in our introduction, hoped that the French encounter with America could be a “*réflexion sur eux-mêmes*” [a reflection upon themselves]. In concluding this study, let us pause one last time on the term *réflexion*. In French, as in English, the word carries a dual meaning. First, in its seemingly passive definition, it is an image projected upon a reflecting body, such as a mirror. In this sense, a New France would be an exact image of France, and America would serve as the mirroring surface. However, we must remember that the mirror is never submissive, that it often reveals what we do not expect to see, and that even in cases when we are satisfied with the image, the mirror projects a likeness that is reversed, thus always changed. In the case of New France, the attempt to produce a direct reflection, and the levels of success and failure of such an enterprise, led to a *réflexion* of the second order, that of a process of thought concerning a topic, here, exactly what a “Nouvelle France” meant. These two types of reflections have provided the subject of this book; through the course of the preceding chapters, we have explored some of the key aspects and implications of the “*réflexions*” provoked by articulations of a New France. Whether in linguistic, geographical, historical, religious, or economic terms, the early colony provided a fertile terrain for the contemplation of identity.

This brings us back to the several key distinctions which framed this study: the imaginary versus observation, and “transplantation” versus “transmutation.” While many of these authors seem to hold a belief in the possibility of a fixed notion of identity which they could simply reproduce in America, their experience and writings betray a different reality. Therefore, while they perhaps *wished* to perform a transplantation, the final product was in fact a transmutation, or change through transfer which creates something new; the ocean crossing and the contact with the New World produced diverse forms of what France implied.

We have presented here a series of visions of identity which show the fluctuating, formative nature of this meeting with the New World. Each of our sections portrays moments at which identity proves to be malleable. The initial encounter with the climate created rhetorical problems, with attempted solutions through wine. Included in both elite and popular notions of identity, wine becomes in the New World a metaphor through which to understand the conversion of a perceived savage people and continent. The “language of the heart” as a conveyor of civilization was tested in the New World, leading to an attempted linguistic eradication of difference. Lescarbot, in Chapter 3, reworks notions of historical background, in flux in France, in order to create a personal vision which encompasses the New World natives, and attempts to rid the world of chaotic identities. Finally, superior Catholicism, part of many different articulations of French identity for centuries, and a way in which France distinguished itself from

other nations, finds a challenge in the face of mercantile colonialism, the outcome of which would be an uncertain reconciliation.

The meeting with the New World, and with what it might have meant to be French at the time, was most rich in these early years when official help, and ideologies, were scarce. Our early authors were left to their own devices concerning the meaning of “une Nouvelle-France.” Later, as Anthony Pagden notes, New France would become a mercantile administrative arm of the larger French Empire, leading to a more bureaucratic understanding of what the name implied.¹

In each of these chapters, and indeed throughout European contact with the Americas, the story of reflections upon the self is also one of reflections upon the Other. These meditations produce both change and violence. There is certainly a middle ground created in these new identities; this is the place of understanding through wine in Lescarbot, of new French/Amerindian hybridity in the *truchement*, of a revised history in which the Amerindian finds a certain place. However, encountering difference often provokes a desire to efface it. Thus, wine is used to render a continent less frightening, language to make natives intelligible, and history to render them French. The enthusiasm of the texts studied here must never allow us to forget the cultural violence effected in each of them.

What new directions can be explored as a result of such an investigation? First, in the extended area of colonial studies, how can similar methods apply to other European empires, if at all? We would argue that there is much room for such an exploration in the history of these empires. What did the British mean when they used the term *New Britain*? It would appear, from the citations at the end of our final chapter, that there are many possible interpretations of the name, and that there was a certain amount of attention paid to its significance. Despite assessments such as that of David Armitage, who proposes that Britain did not conceptualize its early empire in national terms, the aforementioned citations as well as such calls as that made by Roger Williams to “To my Deare and Welbeloved Friends and Countrey-men, in old and new England” inspire curiosity.² Such statements as Peter Hulme’s that early-modern English travel writing constitutes a “... self-conscious effort to create a continuous epic myth of origin for the emerging imperial nation,” or Mary

¹ See Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World* (New Haven, 1995), chapter 3.

² See David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 8. Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America or An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America called New-England* (London, 1643). It seems especially provocative to explore these questions in relation to the “New British History” launched by J.G.A. Pocock’s “British history: a plea for a new subject,” *Journal of Modern History* 4 (1975), and which calls for studies which “explore the possibility of a political history of the Atlantic Archipelago as a coherent entity, not just the sum of its national constituents” (p. 1). Other examples, which do not however discuss colonial empires, are Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts (eds), *British Consciousness and British Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533–1707* (Cambridge, 1998); or Colin Kidd’s *British Identities Before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, 1999).

C. Fuller's assertion that "Elizabethan and Jacobean voyage texts" are "... central to forming the idea of the English nation," attest to a growing interest in the area.³ Further South, what were the possible interpretations of a New Spain? What is the relationship between the New World and Iberian identity? In short, how did the New World affect, and serve to form, individual European national identities? What were the ways in which America tested or transformed these strategies of identification?

A second area of continued interest related to our subject brings us back to France, this time in a modern context. How can moments such as the confrontation with what it meant to construct a New France help us to understand current politics of identification? In our era of a "New Europe" based less on nation-states and more on unification and cooperation, there are multifarious reflections published on what it means to be French, or British, or Spanish, or Italian. An example from recent history comes in then-Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's end-of-year address to the French in 2000, in which he proclaims that "At the moment of our entry into the 21st century, I am happy to see that a New France is being drawn under our eyes." This New France, for Jospin, must take two roads. First, he assures that "... this New France must have a great European ambition" and that "... she has much to gain from a strong Europe." In the face of this novelty, however, Jospin reminds us that "... it is also necessary that this New France remain faithful to herself," for "France is a great old nation. Better aware of her history, proud of her culture, of her lifestyle, she will conserve her identity." Further defining France in relation to the novelty of Europe, he claims that "France is only herself when she is participating in the universal."⁴ Like Lescarbot attempting a revision of French history in order to insert the kingdom into the current of colonial endeavors, Jospin is both remembering and revising identity here.

More recently, the French president Nicolas Sarkozy has created a "Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Development." One key mission of this arm of the government is to "Promote our identity." The official description of this mandate is as follows:

French identity is at the same time the heritage of our history and the future of our national community. The Constitution of the Fifth Republic, in its first article, affirms that "France is an indivisible, secular, democratic, and social Republic. This Republic ensures equality before the law without distinction of origins, race, or religion." The promotion of our identity is a response to the rise of divergent communities, and aims to preserve the balance of our Nation.⁵

³ Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1697* (London, 1986), p. 90; Mary C. Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America: 1576–1624* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 1.

⁴ Lionel Jospin, "La nouvelle France qui se dessine," *Le Journal du Dimanche* 12/31/00, p. 5. (my translation)

⁵ The role and mission of this Ministry can be found at <http://premier-ministre.gouv.fr/iminidco/ministere>. (my translation)

An understanding of the historically changing, uncertain, and malleable nature of national identifications allows the modern subject to view such articulations of a static and threatened vision of “France” with a deconstructing eye. Acknowledgement of earlier versions of the similar processes can add the historico-critical view necessary to an understanding of such political discussions of identity.

In sum, thinking about moments such as France’s attempt to transform the New World in its image, and the resulting discussions of identity, can enlighten visions of the French and European pasts, as well as the present. A vision of flow between colony and metropolis, in which images of the self are infused with notions from multiple directions, can only serve to strengthen our understanding of early-modern strategies of identification. In the present, remembering the pushing, pulling, borrowing, effacing, and changing involved in moments at which identifications are articulated can allow us to look inward on our own methods of self-construction.

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